

Chair Prusak and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my support for HB 2571. My name is Peter Buckley, I'm a former legislator from District 5 in Jackson County, now being very well represented by Rep. Pam Marsh. I currently work with Southern Oregon Success, a collaboration of all levels of education, health care, mental health care, human services, public safety and workforce development in Jackson and Josephine counties.

During my time in the legislature, I served for 8 years as House Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means. One of the programs that I very enthusiastically supported in the budget process were School Based Health Centers. The data on SBHCs is clear and compelling. Schools with SBHCs experience better attendance, better academic outcomes and better health outcomes than schools without them.

There is an Equity issue as well. Data shows that low-income families and traditionally underserved families have less access to regular health care, mental and behavioral health care and dental care than more privileged families. School Based Health Centers provide that access. There is no need to take time off from work or from school to travel back and forth to medical providers. The care is there, at the school, meeting students and their families where they are.

With Southern Oregon Success, we've spent considerable time developing strategies to help children and families in our region thrive. One of the strategies that has significant momentum is very straightforward: to have a School Based Health Center at every school in Jackson and Josephine counties. Our three Federally Qualified Health Centers—La Clinica, Rogue Community Health and Siskiyou Community Health—are fully committed to this goal, as are our two Coordinated Care Organizations, AllCare and Jackson Care Connect. We have a significant number of SBHCs in Jackson County, and the results are clear. And with the challenges our schools are now facing with Behavioral Health issues, expanding the number of SBHCs just makes sense.

I'm particularly supportive of HB 2591's call for additional planning grants, the pilots for tele-health/school nurse models, and the mobile SBHC pilots. We would welcome the opportunity for one or more of our clinics to apply to serve in the pilot programs. We know SBHCs well in Southern Oregon, and I urge your strong support of this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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