

March 24, 2021

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Education

RE: Support Senate Bill 782

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Finn Jacobson. I'm a student at Rex Putnam High School in Milwaukie, Oregon. I am a member of Students for a Healthy Oregon and I'm here today to ask for your support for Senate Bill 782.

Senate Bill 782 is important because for far too long have the mental health needs of Oregon's students been overlooked in our school system. Students are suffering in silence, often turning to methods of self harm and even suicide to cope with a problem which they do not have the proper resources to understand. We have a wonderful opportunity to identify the problem at its source through dedicated mental health screenings at school in partnership with local community clinics and resources.

I am seventeen years old and live with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, but that is not something I knew about myself until just five months ago, in October of last year. I struggled my entire life, feeling anxious and burnt out constantly. My grades and relationships suffered because I did not know what I was experiencing. I presented with symptoms consistent with GAD long before I was diagnosed, and if I had gone through a mental health screening at a place like school, I could have been proactive about my mental health much, much earlier-- I could have saved those grades and relationships. I write this with renewed hope that the students who come after me will not have to suffer in silence like I did because of urgent and careful action taken by this committee to set in motion an initiative which will revolutionize mental health in Oregon.

I thank the committee for their time, and urge the passing of Senate Bill 782.

Respectfully,
Finn Jacobson
Rex Putnam High School