

To: House Committee on Education  
From: Alanna Russell, RN  
RE: Support for HB 2959

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson and members of the committee—

My name is Alanna Russell. I am a school health nurse of four years, and I am writing to express my support for House Bill 2959.

As a trained health professional in schools, I am both licensed and practice within school systems and settings that can sometimes be in conflict with one another. We believe our students deserve the best possible educational journey at every turn and we know that the barriers that provide for these conflicting rules to our licensure are systemic, so we know the solutions will take long-term commitment and dedication.

My first year as a school nurse, which was also my first year as a nurse at all, I was assigned to five school districts. My caseload was over 400 students. In order for those students to be safe at school, I as the nurse was supposed to train staff members in students' health protocols within the first week of the school year. The reality is that this is not possible to do when you have so many students, and there were multiple close calls because of it. Despite that reality, I was still responsible for the safety of those 400 students under my licensure, and under the ethical duty that I felt as their nurse. I spent my first year working nearly every night and weekend in an attempt to keep up with the caseload and keep my students safe, all the while knowing that it would be impossible for me to truly do so.

I now am fortunate to work in one school district and maintain a caseload size that is more aligned with the requirements of my licensure. I feel confident that staff are trained adequately and I have the time to develop health protocols that are better tailored to the needs of my individual students. I recently spoke with a parent who told me that since moving to our district, this was the first time that she felt safe sending her medically fragile child to school, because she knew a nurse was readily available.

One clear concern expressed by members from all licensed professionals working in an education setting is the disconnect between requirements of licensure and the realities of practice in schools. That is why we need HB 2959, which will create a Task Force to examine the scope of practice for each type of licensed health professional in schools, establish criteria to help define when procedures are inconsistent with scope of practice, and provide recommendations for alignment.

Thank you for your time today and I encourage the committee to vote YES on HB 2959.

Alanna Russell, RN, BSN  
School Health Nurse  
Yamhill County

