

Submitter: Nat Roadarmel
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

“Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nat Roadarmel and I am currently an organizer with Family Forward, and was previously a teacher in Portland Public Schools for 3 years.

I’m writing in support of HB 2729, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need now. Oregon is ranked 49th in the nation for youth mental health, and it’s showing in our schools through rampant behavior issues and high rates of chronic absenteeism. HB 2729 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health.

A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs that increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and 18% less likely to report a suicide attempt. From my first-hand experience in schools, I know that often SBHCs are the ONLY health services some students have reliable access to. They are an absolutely essential part of the success of our students and our communities. The school-based health center program is one of the ways that Oregon shows its commitment to youth health and wellbeing, and the funding of this program benefits ALL Oregon residents.

I support this bill because all youth deserve access to health services that don't rely on the job or health care their parents have. Our youth need this now and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. I urge you to vote yes on HB 2729.”

Thank you,
Nat Roadarmel