

Submitter: Kelly Coates

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kelly Coates, and I am Board Chair for the Oregon School-Based Health Alliance. 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.

I support this bill because I believe that funding and services are needed to support youth where they spend the majority of their day . . . schools! Meaningful systems change to develop and sustain places and spaces that allow for youth to thrive, physically, mentally, academically and socially are needed to change the scary trends we have been seeing over the last several years.

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,
Kelly E. Coates, PhD, MPH