

Submitter: Kristen Fraley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729
Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kristen Fraley, and I am a nonprofit leader who has worked with students throughout my 10 year career. 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 have seen firsthand the toll that a lack of support has had on students. They often share that they feel hopeless, disengaged, and full of despair. This affects every facet of their lives and the results in them becoming withdrawn, depressed and listless. We owe it to our children and our future to address their mental health concerns and provide holistic support in order to help our youth become thriving adults. I support this bill because school health resources are critical.

Our youth need this now and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. This is an epidemic and we have a responsibility to the children in our community. I urge you to vote yes on HB 2729.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Kristen