

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erin O'Halloran, and I serve as a Social skills specialist/mental health provider in Clackamas ESD. I have been in this role for 8, during which I have had the opportunity to provide essential health services to our students while collaborating closely with the educational team.

I am writing in support of House Bill 2423, which proposes the establishment of the School-Based Health Professionals Taskforce.

In my role as Social skills specialist/mental health provider, I am responsible for Provide mental health support to students in special education services. Screen for suicide and threats. Coordinate with outside mental health and medical professionals. . Over the course of my career, I have observed that current licensing requirements—despite their good intentions—do not always align with the unique needs of the school environment. For example, There have been numerous times where I'm asked to prioritize teaching SEL curriculum over screening a student for suicidal ideation. Additionally, there are times where I need to be available outside of contact hours per my license to ensure the safety of students. For example, ethically, I must transfer care to the appropriate mental health professional or stay to safety plan with a parent if I believe a student may act on suicidal ideation. If a parent reaches out to me over the summer with concern about their student, in some situations I may be liable under my license if I do not respond or provide appropriate care. .

Better aligning school policy with the OBLPCT of ethics will not only allow me to provide better care for my students, it will reduce liability and risk. There is a growing need for mental health support in schools and this bill will help make sure the mental health professionals in schools are being used in the most effective and impactful ways. .

Supporting this bill will show that you feel that addressing student mental health needs is a top priority. As a licensed marriage and family therapist, I would rather be providing mental health services than planning a field trip.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erin O'Halloran
Social skills specialist/mental health provider
Clackamas ESD