

Submitter: Rebecca Chmela

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2423

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

My name is Rebecca Chmela, and I am a District Nurse for the Beaverton School District. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB2423, which will establish the School-Based Health Professionals Taskforce to ensure that licensing board rules accurately reflect the realities of working in school settings.

I have had varied nursing experience throughout my career, and I can attest that school nursing is a very distinct environment for healthcare professionals. I am a part-time nurse in a large metro school district, covering two schools. There is a great disconnect between what educators think my role is versus what it actually entails and the legality of what I can and cannot do. One such area of confusion is where FERPA and HIPAA overlap or are at odds with each other. I experienced this ambiguity last year when working with a student who had a reportable, communicable disease and what the staff expected me to tell them versus what I could actually tell them.

Schools are not clinics. School nurses are not nursing educators and we are also not classified as case managers. However, there are aspects of both that come into play every day. Aligning licensing standards with school-based practice will help professionals feel confident in their roles and better serve students without unnecessary regulatory barriers.

I urge you to support HB2423 so that Oregon's licensing boards can establish clear, appropriate guidelines for school-based health professionals, improving both professional retention and student access to necessary services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Chmela, RN, BSN, BA, CPN