

Submitter: Erik Thompson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2596
May 14, 2025

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Erik Thompson, and I am a licensed school psychologist with six years of experience working in Oregon's public schools. I am writing today in strong support of HB 2596, which would enact the School Psychologist Interstate Compact to reduce licensure barriers and improve access to essential school-based mental health and educational services.

School psychologists are in short supply across the nation, and Oregon is no exception. At a time when student needs—especially around mental health, learning challenges, and school engagement—are on the rise, it is critical that we remove systemic barriers that prevent highly trained professionals from being able to serve where they are needed most.

Under current licensure laws, school psychologists who relocate must navigate a cumbersome, time-consuming, and often duplicative process to become licensed in a new state—even when they already hold a valid credential and years of experience. This creates unnecessary delays for schools and missed opportunities for students who rely on timely, specialized support.

HB 2596 is a forward-thinking solution. By joining the School Psychologist Interstate Compact, Oregon would streamline the licensure process while preserving rigorous professional standards. It would allow qualified school psychologists to practice across member states, reducing barriers to employment and increasing access to care for students.

This legislation is especially important for professionals and families who experience frequent relocation due to military service, socioeconomic instability, or cultural and family obligations. School psychologists work with military-connected families, those facing housing insecurity, and others navigating the challenges of frequent school transitions. Every time a family relocates, it disrupts not only the student's education but also their access to consistent psychological and educational support. The same holds true for school psychologists who are part of those communities—who may want to continue their careers in a new state but are delayed or discouraged by licensure barriers.

HB 2596 recognizes that qualified practitioners should not be penalized for moving—and that students deserve consistent access to services, regardless of geography. By supporting this bill, Oregon will affirm its commitment to addressing the shortage of school psychologists, promoting workforce mobility, and improving outcomes for students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support. I respectfully urge you to pass HB 2596.

Sincerely,
Erik Thompson, Ed.S.
Nationally Certified School Psychologist