

Dear Representative Doherty,

I learned about today's vote and I am writing to ask for your support of School Social Workers with HB2940 and HB2441.

**Wilson High School has *eliminated* their School Social Worker position for 2019-2020**, due to a lack of understanding of just how invaluable the services of that one position play in the lives of 1600 students and families.

As a parent and volunteer, I have seen first hand the stressful and often traumatic situations students endure and encounter at school. While volunteering, I had a student tell me she was being stalked and feared for her family; being able to walk the student to meet with Maureen Brennan, LCSW, C-SSWS-Wilson's current School Social Worker, provides student invaluable resources and support, that will not exist next year.

Additionally, many students come to school needing services that can't be fulfilled academically, if their basic needs are not being met. I personally witnessed the excitement and relief a student felt receiving a warm coat in December, prior to winter break.

**The elimination of the one and only Social Worker at Wilson will have the profound and immediate impact on students and families.**

The list below are the visible immediate impacts, but there will be innumerable untold impacts, repercussions and danger to the students most in need at Wilson.

**Impact to Students and Families with the elimination of Wilson's social worker:**

- There will be Less Trained Staff available to complete Suicide and Threat Assessments and complete Safety Plans.
- There will be Less Professional Staff: to provide crisis counseling and mental health support to students, day to day.
- There will be Fewer Referrals Made to Community Resources for: due to lack of staff time and community resource knowledge.
- There will not be a Finals Aid Station at Wilson High School to provide students with support and coping skills to successfully complete Final Exams at the end of each Semester.
- There will not be a weekly Student-Led Anxiety Support Group.
- There will not be individualized support to students and families following Drug and Alcohol Hearings. Students and families will not have confidential conversations re: support, treatment, decision making and harm reduction.
- There will not be additional fundraising and procurement of gift cards and cash to meet student and family needs.
- There will not be an onsite Food Pantry to meet daily snack and lunch needs of students, nor ongoing food needs for families.
- There will not be an onsite Clothing Closet to provide students with warm jackets, shoes, clothing and personal hygiene items.

*School social workers have the training and education that makes them uniquely qualified to understand and develop systems that support students and families with the biggest barriers to academic achievement and subsequent life success.*

*All school social workers have explicit education around systemic racism and discrimination, which is a central factor in Oregon's persistently low graduation rates for students of color.*

I urge you to vote **YES** on HB 2441 and HB 2940!

Thank you for your support,

Shelli Hutchinson

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Parent to 3 teens at Wilson and Wilson High School Volunteer