

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee,

As a school psychologist intern working in Oregon schools, I urge you to support House Bill 2940. As of 2017, nearly half the children in the Oregon (approximately 47%) had experienced one or more types of trauma (National Survey of Children's Health, 2017). Access to comprehensive school-based social-emotional and mental health resources for Oregon students is critical to support student success. "Only 16 percent of children who need mental health services receive them, and roughly 80 percent of the children who do gain access receive them in school settings" (Baffour, 2016, para. 9). It is essential that trained professionals provide access to mental health services through school settings to address this area of need.

School social workers are critical members of school-based mental health supports and receive specialized training. Some services are delivered directly to children and families and include, but are not limited to (School Social Work Association of America, 2012):

- Crisis prevention and intervention
- Developing intervention strategies
- Assisting with skill development
- Counseling with children, groups, and families
- Assisting families with access to community services and resources

Other services are delivered through supporting school staff and include, but are not limited to (School Social Work Association of America, 2012):

- Consultation with multidisciplinary teams
- Assisting teachers with behavior management
- Developing staff training programs
- Connecting educators to community resources

Please make access to social emotional and mental supports a higher priority for Oregon students by supporting House Bill 2940. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Rachel Santiago, M.S.