

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Toby Ann Abraham-Rhine

Date: May 5th, 2019

Re: Opposition to HB 2876-1 (Coordinated Comprehensive School Counseling Program)

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2876-1.

As a professional school counselor, I assure you that there is innate value in providing on-campus therapy for students through licensed social workers who are trained in various modalities. With 1 in 4 students in our district experiencing trauma. In fact, this is a collaboration that has been a long time coming. Professional school counselors serve as the front line for our students, delivering comprehensive guidance curriculum in the classrooms, stepping in whenever and wherever we are needed in our buildings because we have the training and background to do so. My skills and education are in individual and group counseling, academic and career planning, crisis intervention and reporting, referring students and families to resources and helping them in every possible manner necessary. On top of all of this, I deliver social emotional learning curriculum to every student in my school, every week. Being able to refer students for on-campus therapy with a licensed social worker is a logical step in prevention of future mental illness and maladaptive behavior.

I oppose HB 2876 because:

The language currently suggests trying to have social workers deliver the comprehensive guidance curriculum. This is a task not suited to social workers. Classroom management and students in today's over crowded classrooms are completely different skillsets now than they were even 5-6 years ago. Let the social workers do what they do best; provide therapy to students. Leave all the extras to the professional school counselors; and there are numerous extras. If the writers of this bill are unaware of the realities of our profession then they have not recently visited a counselor at work.

I ask that you not support HB 2876-1.

Sincerely,

Toby Ann Abraham-Rhine, MA, PSC

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