

Submitter: Ambyr Henderson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: HB2618

My name is Ambyr Henderson, and I am writing today as a speech-language pathologist serving school based settings for over 13 years now. As a licensed and certified healthcare provider in the education system, I am here to express my support for House Bill 2618. It is imperative that the Department of Education moves forward with a study to identify the best methodology for determining the appropriate number of students on a workload for school-based healthcare professionals.

The rising demands and higher workload numbers is resulting in high levels of burnout for our profession. We are seeing an increase in students with higher academic, medical, and mental health needs. With this increase of students needing specially designed instruction we are not seeing an increase in FTE to adequately meet those needs.

In recent years, it is common to see caseload sizes of anywhere between 70-100 students. These numbers exceed the recommendations from national organizations (e.g. American Speech and Hearing Association). This is simply unattainable and oftentimes professionals are not able to get their basic needs or contractual rights met. Professionals are working through lunches and after hours simply to meet the high demands of paperwork and therapeutic preparation to support students. These are the leading causes of turnover in our field as highly marketable professionals can find more reasonable working conditions elsewhere.

With lower workload sizes for school-based healthcare professionals we would not only see positive impacts on student progress but also see professional retention increase.

I strongly encourage the committee to vote YES on HB 2618.