



[www.campuschaplains.org](http://www.campuschaplains.org)  
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February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

Testimony in support of school chaplains / SB0612:

Dear Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Chaplains have played a necessary role in this nation for over 200 years as their unique position has shaped its moral and spiritual backbone. Because of their well-documented success among people of all races, beliefs, cultures, and orientations, their immense value is recognized and utilized among many institutions today, including government facilities, hospitals, airports, professional sports teams, prisons, the military, and corporations. Their ability to provide necessary spiritual care has been shown to dissipate tension, resolve conflict, and bring hope. In times of crisis, Chaplains are brought in to provide trauma care and bring hope – even in some of the darkest hours this nation has faced. According to a Gallup Poll, 93% of all people polled found interactions with chaplains valuable.

According to the NEA, teachers are suffering from burnout, and many are looking for early retirement at an unprecedented rate. Public Schools have a massive shortage of LPCs (licensed professional counselors), violence continues to rise, children are dealing with the highest levels of mental health issues and hopelessness.

Teachers are tested at the same levels of stress and anxiety as First Responders, yet unlike our First Responders, teachers do not have access to a chaplain. US teachers are 76% female, which also seems to imply discrimination against women and/or teachers who continue to suffer from ongoing stress and anxiety without access to chaplains.

Chaplains are trained to provide spiritual/secular care for people of all backgrounds. They are trained in situational awareness and risk assessment, provide another layer of school security, safe spaces for teachers, staff, and students, provide non-religious spiritual care, act as a liaison between staff and parents, acquainted with referral agencies, confidential counseling, trained in trauma care, and represent God (not the church).

As the world's largest provider of certified school chaplains (30k schools in 23 countries), we have seen remarkable improvements in Motivation and goal setting, inter-student relationships, student-teacher relations, respect for authorities, problem-solving, school safety, self-respect, confidence, and grades. Our data also shows a decrease in Reported violence at school and home, alcohol and drug consumption, discipline issues, and bullying.

We urge you to please support the passage of this bill, as our nation's future depends on it.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Johnny Davis

Chief Development Officer

**Data Sources on the following page\***

Gallup Poll - Interactions with Chaplains:

<https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/406838/one-four-americans-served-chaplains.aspx>

NEA Article on Teacher Burnout and Early Retirement: <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-survey-massive-staff-shortages-schools-leading-educator-burnout-alarming-number-educators>

LPC Shortage in US Public Schools: <https://www.charliehealth.com/research/most-states-have-a-school-counselor-shortage>

NIJ Data on Violence in Schools: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/what-do-data-reveal-about-violence-schools>

CDC Stats on Mental Health among children post-COVID:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7103a3.htm>