

As a mental health therapist, working fully remotely, and with the majority of my clients being teens and children; I can not express enough the magnitude of the positive effects the passing of this bill could provide for students state-wide. One of the largest barriers to consistent mental health care, that I have experienced with clients, is from parents discussing the difficulty with scheduling. Even with availability in the evening times from clinicians, it proves difficult to fit every client in the short span of time between returning home from school and when they need to get ready for bed. Children are belonging to clubs, activities, and sports-which is something many of them require to help build daily routine, and social supports; but this also affects scheduling. As well, it has been my experience working with these clients that they are encountering a lot of their triggers, and symptoms throughout the school day. Some children experience bullying, self-esteem deficits, difficulty managing academics, many different anxieties, and many of these are experienced while on their school campus. The benefits of providing care to these students, while they are in the environment where these symptoms are most encountered can provide an extra sense of well-being that I believe could be extremely positive. While attempting to provide collaborative care, I have spoken with many school counselors who do not have the time to provide one-on-one care on a regular basis for a lot of these students, which means that numerous students are going without these services if they are not able to fit it into their schedule at home. In short, I do believe this Bill could provide inclusive, individualized, and consistent care for students across the school system that are in need of mental health care.

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