

Lisa Cataldi

From: Amy Herlihy <amyherlihy456@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 8:50 PM
To: House Education Committee
Cc: Rep. Cassar, Liana M.
Subject: H 6667 Trauma Informed Schools Act

To: Chair McNamara and members of the the House Education Committee via email
HouseEducation@rilegislature.gov

From: Amy Herlihy

Date: January 25, 2022

RE: H 6667 Trauma Informed Schools Act

My name is Amy Herlihy, and I am a resident of Barrington, RI. I am testifying on behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America and I urge this committee to support H 6667, the Trauma Informed Schools Act, sponsored by Representative Marcia Ranglin-Vassell. Moms Demand Action is the largest grassroots gun violence prevention organization in the United States with over 6 million supporters across the nation.

As a volunteer leader for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America, I unfortunately bear witness to the collateral damage that is associated with gun violence on a regular basis. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes individual trauma as resulting from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. Trauma-informed educational practices as outlined in H 6667 enable educators and school administrators to consider the pervasive nature of trauma and promote environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may inadvertently re-traumatize. I am employed by the Pawtucket School Department and I have worked with children who, I think, are processing their trauma through their behavior, such as refusing to engage in learning, assaulting their teachers and peers and refusing to leave the school building at the end of the day. In addition, I have also witnessed upticks in challenging behaviors before school vacations and summer break, as, in my opinion, some children worry about whether their safety and access to food on a regular basis will be maintained when not in school. It is imperative that school staff understand the connection between children's behavior and trauma and for school staff to learn how best to support these children when they are crying out for help and need us most.

With gun violence surging across our country and here in Rhode Island, these practices are more important than ever so that we can support children in their quest to learn, succeed, and thus, graduate from high school/college, and positively contribute to our community. Our children deserve to be educated in an environment that promotes health, wellness and safety in order to protect them from gun violence and its aftereffects. Please pass H 6667 to the House floor for a vote with a recommendation for passage by the House.

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[CLICK HERE](#) to help reduce unintentional shootings by children
[CLICK HERE](#) to learn about Rhode Island's Extreme Risk Protection Order
[DONATE](#) to our Fundraiser

Amy Herlihy (she/her/hers)

RHODE ISLAND VOLUNTEER CHAPTER LEADER

MOMS DEMAND ACTION FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA
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