

Jennifer Lima
H6667
Support

I am writing today in support of H6667 which would establish the implementation of trauma-informed practices in schools throughout the state.

According to the NEA (National Education Association), nearly 35 million children in the United States have been affected by at least one or more types of serious childhood trauma. Research shows that youth who have experienced trauma are at a significantly higher risk for impairments across various cognitive functions that directly affect their ability to learn. The greater the number of adverse childhood experiences, the lower the chance a youth will care about engaging and succeeding in school.

But this bill recognizes that with the right support, students affected by trauma are still able to achieve their potential. Trauma does not need to define them.

Supporting students who suffer from childhood trauma requires whole school involvement and transformation. All school employees play a crucial role in supporting students impacted by childhood trauma. All school employees should be included in paid professional development that reinforces their knowledge and skills around childhood trauma and provide opportunities to learn effective ways to strengthen resilience.

The American Psychological Association defines resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. While adverse events are certainly painful and difficult, they don't have to determine the outcome of your life. There are many aspects of your life you can control, modify and grow with. That's the role of resilience. While certain factors might make some individuals more resilient than others, resilience isn't a character trait that only some people possess. On the contrary, resilience involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that anyone can learn to develop.

It's my belief that incorporating trauma-informed practices within our schools will have a significant positive impact on the children in our state and I urge you to pass this bill.

Please note that I am currently a member of the school committee in North Kingstown but I am writing as a citizen, not as a member of that body. Thank you.

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