

Dear committee members of the House Finance,

My name is Aliah. I am a student at Mount Pleasant High School and an active participant in Young Voices. I am here today to support the bill [insert bill number or name], which aims to increase the number of social workers in our schools.

Throughout my life, I have moved from place to place, and as a result, I have attended many different schools. I have noticed that social workers (and their accessibility) are essential for students. Schools should be safe places for everyone: immigrants, students facing mental health challenges, and those who need special education support.

Every day, students face difficulties either at home or within the school environment. We should have the knowledge and confidence that we can rely on a specialist at our schools.

In my personal experience, there have been times when I needed a social worker, but my school either did not have enough staff or had only one social worker responsible for too many students, making it impossible to meet everyone's needs. Since most schools have only a few social workers, students can only meet with them occasionally, and a relationship based on trust cannot be developed. Without that trust, a meaningful bond cannot be built.

For all these reasons, I strongly believe this bill should be passed.

Thank you for your time,

Aliah

