

Name: Ophelia Ravenia

Date: April 28, 2025

Organization: None

Bill: H6045

Stance: FOR

To the Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Ophelia Ravenia. I am writing in support of the proposed bill– H6045– mandating one full-time social worker per 250 students in public K-12 schools. I am currently a school social work intern with the Providence Public School District and a soon-to-graduate Master of Social Work student at Rhode Island College.

Rhode Island's public schools often have one social worker for the entire school, regardless of the student population and level of need. In schools with overextended social workers, regardless of the social worker's experience and competence, it is impossible for one social worker to meet the needs of the student population. Students can easily slip through the cracks, and overstretched school social workers cannot provide the highest quality support for our young people. This is especially important at present– young people in America are facing a sharp increase in depression, trauma, anxiety, and suicidality.

Social workers play a crucial role in our schools. The interventions provided by school social workers help to address chronic absenteeism, student mental and behavioral health challenges, and promote family engagement. School social workers help assess student needs– whether it's part of a special education referral, or helping school families who are facing food insecurity. Social workers intervene when students are in crisis, helping assess the situation and ensure that our students are safe in the classroom, at home, and in the community.

I encourage the committee to do right by our young people and support this bill.

Sincerely,

Ophelia W. Ravenia

MSW Student & School Social Work Intern