

Good afternoon members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Anais, I am a student at Mount Pleasant and a youth advocate at Young Voices, an afterschool program in Providence, RI. I am writing this testimony to ask for your support in passing Bill H7456, which would increase the number of social workers in schools.

I think this bill is beneficial because social workers are very important members of society. In my opinion, there should be social workers everywhere, as they help address issues such as mental health struggles, abuse, domestic violence, and lack of access to resources, these are problems that exist in every community. And just as problems exist, there must be solutions. There should always be someone available to offer support, especially for teenagers who are already facing many other challenges.

For me, the approval of this bill is important because just over a year ago, I went through a difficult personal and family situation. Although the social worker that helped me was not from my school, I was fortunate to have their support. That experience made me realize just how essential social workers are. I think everyone should have access to the kind of support I received, and I wish that social workers had been in a place as accessible as my school, we should have quick and easy access to them.

Please pass H7456 because in the society we live in, full of economic and social inequalities, we need more people who are willing to help and serve others. This is key to the well-being of all.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anais