

Alex Wu
Scarborough
LD 2002

Good Afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Alex Wu, and I am a junior at Scarborough High School. I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 2002, An Act to Provide Incentives to Schools That Contract for Certain Social Work and Family Therapy Services.

Throughout my highschool career I have experienced and witnessed the difficulty of mental health access, specifically in Middle and High School post Covid-19. I am scared for my peers. I am scared of a world where instead of living up to solve the problems handed down to us by past generations my peers choose suicide instead.

Just last year during a particularly bad state of mental health, I asked a friend to go see a teacher for help. Even that was difficult and talking about mental health is scary. I cannot imagine how that might have been even worse if we did not readily have access to those resources, or have faculty prepared to deal with mental situations. For many, that access can be the difference between choosing life or death.

Familial relationships are a large part of that mental health. As students, most of us are still housed with a parent that we spend the time out of our school day with. As such our relationships with our parents play a huge role in our day to day mental health. Access to mental healthcare is difficult though. Like with any other form of healthcare in America, the onus is upon the family to pay for that care. Many families do not have the means to pay for this, or have parents that are unwilling to pay for such care. I know specifically with my asian friends, mental health is seen as non-existent.

I cannot count how many times I have 'jokes' about "I'm going to kill myself". For that reason. I urge you to vote ought to pass.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.