

Regarding Bill HB2420:

My name is Heather Oden.

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Bill HB2420

I am an opponent of the bill.

I previously worked as part of a therapeutic team in education. I am currently the Executive Director of a non-profit that offers wraparound care for those seeking a new beginning. Therefore, I understand the need for solid therapeutic practice and a secure, safe relationship between a client and the practitioner. Having worked with college students for several years, and volunteering with high school students in faith-based organizations prior to that, I have witnessed first-hand the need for students to be able to confidentially approach trusted, vetted adults. If school employees, specifically Guidance Counselors and School Counselors, have to refrain from offering services to a student until written and verbal consent is obtained from a parent, students will be at great risk of increased self-harm and suicidality. Adolescence is a time of emotional volatility. Forcing school employees that have been specially trained to de-escalate these situations will come at a great cost to the students. This bill endangers students' mental health and ties the hands of the individuals hired to provide appropriate care and comfort, keeping students safe and healthy. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill as it is currently written.

Date of hearing: Jan. 22 at 1:30pm