

Chairman Heinert and members of the education committee:

My name is Mary Wick and I am an elementary teacher at a small rural school in North Dakota. I am also a parent to a high school and elementary student. I am writing this morning in opposition of SB 2340 as it is written.

I feel it is extremely important to maintain the integrity of our school counseling programs in our schools.

As a parent I believe it is a program that helps our students with career development and college planning. I am thankful that this is done at school which ensures our students are prepared for the future. School counselors are extremely an instrumental part of this which I can't understand how this would be fulfilled by other professionals.

As a teacher I currently have a student who often needs breaks. The school counselor is available when this student, or other students, are struggling and is here for myself and the student. The counselor is here for me so that I can focus on the other students in my classroom and here for the student to self regulate and get back on track so they can be successful in the classroom.

I would ask that you consider adding language to this bill that makes it clear that school counselors should be prioritized when hiring to fill the 300:1 ratio.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,  
Mary Wick