

Andrew Rohrich LAC/LPCC
Government Affairs Chair
North Dakota Counseling Association
Bismarck, ND

Feb 10, 2025

House Education Committee
Pat D. Heinert

Subject: Testimony Regarding House Bill 1490

Dear Mr. Pat Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to express my [support/opposition] for House Bill 1490 that would enact a new section to chapter 15.1-13 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to required psychological evaluations for school counselors. I oppose this bill because it would not have the desired result.

Protecting our children is something we all should be in support of, so the reason for this bill sounds good, but it really isn't. This legislation would have multiple negative outcomes. First, it would increase a wait time for psychological testing, so our kids who need to get testing for diagnostic clarity will have longer waits, as it currently can take months to get a referral for a psychological evaluation. These longer waits would lead to more disruption in the classroom, more time spent in crisis intervention and less time with learning, which affects all students and teachers, not just the student who is waiting for their testing. Next it could deter good counselors from seeking employment in our state, and it would deter teachers from becoming counselors, (many counselors started off as teachers). The past two sessions there has been legislation to try and make it easier for schools to fill these counselor roles, (including the bill that the education committee is hearing just before this one) The licensing boards and NDDPI already have extensive background checks, as well as disciplinary procedures. If this new legislation could somehow accomplish increasing safety for students, then it should include any professional who works with children, including teachers.

I urge you to oppose this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at Andrew.rohrich@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Andrew Rohrich