

Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1490

Presented to the House Education Committee

North Dakota Legislative Assembly

Chairperson Heinert, Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Matt Liebel, and I am writing here today to express my opposition to House Bill 1490, which would require psychological evaluations for school counselors.

School counselors play a vital role in supporting students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. They are highly trained professionals who already undergo rigorous education, certification, and background checks to ensure they are well-qualified to work with students. Mandating psychological evaluations as a condition of their employment places an unnecessary burden on these dedicated professionals, potentially discouraging individuals from entering or remaining in the field.

There is no evidence to suggest that such a requirement would improve student outcomes or school safety. Instead, it adds an additional layer of scrutiny that unfairly singles out counselors, implying a lack of trust in their professional integrity. If the goal is to support counselors in their work, we should be focusing on reducing caseloads, providing adequate resources, and ensuring competitive salaries rather than implementing unnecessary and intrusive evaluations.

At a time when North Dakota is already facing shortages in school mental health professionals, this bill risks further exacerbating the problem. I urge the committee to oppose House Bill 1490 and instead explore ways to support, not hinder, the important work of school counselors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Liebel

Williston, ND