

Dear House Education Committee Members:

I would like to thank you for allowing me, along with Interim Director Lynn Stanley, the opportunity to testify on behalf of NASW-VT in support of S. 115 as it relates to school menstrual products and the school Wellness Program. We are grateful for the work and support you have given to this issue, and for dedicating yourself to ensuring an inclusive and comprehensive health education for the next generation of Vermonters.

I would like to follow up on our proposed amendment to S.115 – including a master’s level school social worker to the members of the Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health. We have followed subsequent testimony on this issue from school counselors, and as each school-based mental health practitioner brings with them a variety of mental health expertise regarding youth and adolescents specifically to school settings, we would like to propose the following:

1. including at least one school counselor in addition to the masters level school social worker..
2. expanding the number of members be increased to at least five members..
3. adding “mental health” to the areas of expertise on the Advisory Council

Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 136 is amended to read:

§ 136. WELLNESS PROGRAM; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WELLNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH

(b) The secretary with the approval of the State Board shall establish an Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health that shall include at least three **five** members associated with the Health services field with expertise in health and mental health services, health education, or health policy, including at least one member who is a masters level school social worker and one member who is a school counselor....

Thank you again,

Laura O’Reilly, BSW
MSW Candidate
University of Vermont