

Testimony of Sabrina M. Kosh
M.S. School Counseling Graduate Student, Southern CT State University

in regards to

H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education
Public Hearing – March 8, 2021

Senator McCrory, Representative Filipe, Senator Somers, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, my name is [NAME] and I am a [PROFESSION] in [NAME OF TOWN/DISTRICT] and [INCLUDE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP IF APPLICABLE]. [P.L.1] Thank you for the opportunity to offer **testimony in regards to H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) - AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

House Bill 6439 sustains Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) payments at the 2021 level, and includes a 10.5% increase from the supplemental federal support in response to COVID-19.

A 10.5% increase [P.L.2] could allow room for a greater presence of school support staff; specifically, increasing student access to such as school counselors, ~~who are~~ as they are trained to assist all students in academic, career, and social/emotional success. The supplemental federal support should be carefully distributed to school districts where there is an increased need, including high poverty areas. As it stands, fewer than 25% of elementary schools have a school counselor present. If even a fraction of this budget were to be allocated towards hiring support staff for schools in need, students will benefit exponentially in these unprecedented times.

Over the past two years, I have worked as a substitute teacher, long-term substitute teacher, paraprofessional, and a full-time graduate student at Southern CT State University in pursuit of earning my master's degree in school counseling. Regardless of my title, I have witnessed first-hand how successful students can be when there is a presence of qualified staff within the school community. This year, we have seen first-hand the ~~dire~~ dire need for school counselors and social workers to help students make sense of our ever-changing world. I am currently earning my practicum hours in a K-8 school, during which I have noticed incredible hardships students are experiencing. Virtual learners are struggling both socially and academically, attendance rates are ~~plummeting~~ plummeting, and student mental health is at risk. With all of these adjustments, students will benefit significantly from a trained professional counselor they can turn to in their school.

Please consider investing not only into student academic success, but also their social/emotional health. Please consider investing in funding for school counselors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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