

*Testimony of*

**Kevin Doherty**

East Hampton Educator

Before the

**Public Health Committee & Committee on Children**

Re:

**HB 5001 - AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH**

February 25, 2022

Good morning members of the Public Health Committee and Committee on Children. Thank you for holding this public hearing to discuss mental health supports for our students. I support the many provisions in HB 5001 and SB 2 that address the student mental health crisis in our schools, especially those relating to staffing support and ensuring classroom teachers have greater input in resources available to students in crisis.

The proposed legislation enhances the recruitment and staffing of social workers but, for the sake of our students, I want to ensure that these provisions will also apply to school counselors, psychologists, special educators, and other certified specialists.

What You Don't See, but as an educator, I see every day, is the impact that trauma has on my students and my school.

Students returning from the pandemic have lost vital social skills to be competent and respectful in a school setting. Not supporting this action will only create a larger social development divide that is crucial for young learners to be successful in and outside the classroom. This would worsen exponentially if staff positions are cut too. Larger class sizes and less staff support will only make the jobs of those in education much more difficult and draining.

Thank you for addressing these critical issues impacting our students, our educators, and our school communities.