

*Testimony of*  
**Chiara Ferraro**  
Vernon Educator  
Before the  
**Education Committee**

Re:

**SB 1 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH SERVICES IN SCHOOLS.**

March 21, 2022

Good morning Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

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.

This year has been my most difficult one of the past 19 as an elementary education teacher. 40% of my students are seriously affected by family trauma (abandonment, violence, foster care), poverty, homelessness, or mental health problems. We have 482 students in our Prek to 5th grade school. We have two social workers (one dedicated to a special program), one psychologist, and one school climate specialist. We are overwhelmed.

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