
SENATE BILL 6618

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Bailey, Van De Wege, King, Schoesler, Short, Wilson, Angel, Warnick, Honeyford, Hasegawa, and Frockt

Read first time 02/23/18. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to ensuring access to mental health counselors by
2 students in public and private schools; adding a new section to
3 chapter 28A.210 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that on February 14,
6 2018, a former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in
7 Florida is alleged to have returned to that high school and carried
8 out one of the nation's worst school shootings by killing seventeen
9 people and injuring many more. The legislature further finds that
10 this student's past revealed a pattern of disciplinary issues and
11 unnerving behavior. His attorney stated that this student has
12 ". . . been through a lot of trauma. He has suffered significant
13 mental illness, and significant mental trauma."

14 The legislature intends to increase access to vulnerable students
15 in our state's public and private schools to mental health
16 counselors. The legislature intends that mental health counselors be
17 available to all students and that these professionals spend time on
18 campuses in every school district to allow student access to a mental
19 health counselor as needed.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.210
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) Every school must employ at least one mental health counselor
4 in order to allow students reasonable access to a mental health
5 counselor as needed. Mental health counselors must work on-site at
6 schools to increase their visibility and to encourage communication
7 between the students and the mental health counselor. Mental health
8 counselors may, as appropriate, observe classrooms upon request by a
9 teacher or student. Teachers or students may make this request
10 anonymously.

11 (2) Mental health counselors must be licensed by the state under
12 chapter 18.225 RCW and may only work within the scope of their
13 license.

14 (3) As used in this section, "school" means a public school or
15 private school with any of the grades kindergarten through twelve.

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