

Requesting President Obama And The United States Congress To Promote Access To School-Based Mental Health Clinic Treatment Services By Eliminating Financial Obstacles And Supporting “*The Student Support Act*” H.R. 320

Referred to: The Health and Personnel Committee (Chairman Aiello, and Legislators Robert S. Parete, Ronk, Belfiglio and Provenzano)

Legislator Robert S. Parete offers the following:

WHEREAS, mental health problems significantly affect the ability of youth to attend school and succeed academically; and

WHEREAS, access to school-based Mental Health Clinic treatment services has been demonstrated to improve school attendance and academic performance by improving access to treatment; and

WHEREAS, these benefits generate local financial savings through increased education State aid related to attendance and decreased special education expenses; and

WHEREAS, school-based treatment services are particularly needed in rural counties where families are often unable to travel great distances to licensed clinics; and

WHEREAS, the stigmatization of people dealing with mental health issues combined with the economic pressures on schools has reduced access to mental health services in Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, school-based treatment services do not generate enough revenues to be financially self-sufficient; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore necessary for counties or school districts to fund the portion of “net deficit” operating expenses that are not covered by revenues; and

WHEREAS, counties and school districts are under pressure to maintain or reduce local tax levies; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 97 of the Laws of 2011 (Property Tax Cap) established a tax levy limit that affects all school districts in Ulster County and a host of other independent taxing entities such as library, fire and water districts. Under this law, the growth in the property tax levy, the total amount to be raised through property taxes charged on the municipality's taxable assessed value of property, is capped at 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less, with some exceptions; and

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WHEREAS, recent funding cuts to Ulster County-based mental health programs have only exacerbated this gap in services; and

WHEREAS, this pressure is an impediment to the financing and availability of mental health treatment services in our schools; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that government develop a financing plan to overcome this impediment so that all students have the opportunity to attain academic success and to promote a more productive society; and

WHEREAS, the Children and Families Services Unit of the Ulster County Mental Health Department was eliminated from the 2013 Ulster County Budget “to better position the county financially for the future”; now, therefore be it,

RESOLVED, the Ulster County Legislature hereby supports H.R. 320, commonly known as *The Student Support Act* introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-9), Chair of the Congressional Social Work Caucus. This bill aims to increase student access to mental health services by providing grants to states to hire additional school social workers, psychologists, and counselors in order to reduce the student-to-provider ratio in elementary and secondary schools. This bill effectively addresses the shortage of mental health providers in schools and provides schools with flexibility to meet the mental health needs of their students; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Ulster County Legislature hereby requests that President Obama and the United States Congress develop plans to eliminate financial obstacles to the establishment of school-based Mental Health Clinic treatment services by subsidizing these services at appropriate levels; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, Barack Obama, United States Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and Congressmen Chris Gibson and Barbara Lee, the New York State Association of Counties, and the National Association of Social Workers,

and moves its adoption.

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ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 20 NOES: 0
(Absent: Legislators Briggs and Fabiano)
(Legislator Harris left at 9:25PM/ returned at 9:28PM)

Passed Committee: Health and Personnel on March 4, 2013

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
NONE

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STATE OF NEW YORK
 ss:
COUNTY OF ULSTER

This is to certify that I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster have compared the foregoing resolution with the original resolution now on file in the office of said clerk, and which was adopted by said Legislature on the 19th Day of March, 2013, and that the same is a true and correct transcript of said resolution and of the whole thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 21st Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Thirteen.

|s| Victoria A. Fabella
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature