

Wesleyan University - Offsite

SB-374 - An Act Requiring Behavioral Health Assessments For Children

I am very much opposed to this bill that has been raised in your committee. I want you to kill this bill and VOTE NO on this for many of the reasons that have already been stated by others here today.

First of all, I understand that a behavioral health assessment is supposed to give an overall picture of how well you feel emotionally and how well you are able to think, reason and remember (cognitive functioning). I also understand that this bill was brought up in response to the Sandy Hook shooting. **We do not yet have a toxicology report for Adam Lanza, or a police investigation report from the shooting, with which to base real solutions on.** We know that Adam Lanza was a troubled person, but we do not know anything about how his problems were being managed, or if he was taking medication which could have side effects ranging from homicidal tendencies to aggressive behavior. **Without any reliable information about his issues or the state of his mental health, why then are you deciding that every child, except private schooled children, needs to have a behavioral health assessment?** Don't you think this is a bit of overkill and knee jerk legislation?? **I do.**

You must understand that behavioral health assessments can be horrendously flawed. The results of these assessments cannot be guaranteed to be correct or reliable. There may be bias on the part of the person(s) doing the assessments. **It has been shown that these assessments contain a great deal of potential for prejudice by the assessors,** including those assessors who might, for instance, be biased against home schooling or who might not share the religious or social beliefs of the parents of children who choose to bring them up in a certain way.

You must also understand that certain assessments have been shown to be a tool with which pharmaceutical companies can get children labeled for the purpose of putting them on medications. This makes assessment companies and pharmaceutical companies quite rich, and unfortunately also ruins a child's health and their life. We have already seen this with programs like Teenscreen, which screened students for suicidal tendencies: the program was rife with fraud and many of the people involved belonged to NAMI or pharmaceutical companies Board of Directors, and they all made quite a bit of money while producing many false positive results.

This type of mandatory screening is wrong. Parents and teachers can already detect if children are exhibiting unusual behaviors and those children's issues are addressed in one way, shape or form. **I would suggest that in Adam Lanza's case, he was not getting the services that he needed and/or he was placed on medications that exacerbated his problems. We should be addressing those issues** and not mandating that every child be screened - to be ultimately labeled and medicated.

I beg you all to please not enact legislation just for the sake of "doing something", but instead enact common sense solutions to the issues regarding securing our schools and keeping our children safe from evil people.

Thank you for your consideration,

Judy Aron

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