

## SB - 374

**Testimony before the Public Health Committee  
SB 374  
Friday March 8, 2013  
Kristen Tierney**

My name is Kristen Tierney; I'm a lifelong caregiver of a non-custodial family member. I represent caregivers through my business Turtles & Lemonade.

I'm here today to speak in opposition of Bills 374

**Bill 374 Behavioral Health Screenings:** I strongly oppose this Bill as written. As written, this Bill will provide an assessment to a parent or guardian in a state that has too few available, accessible and cost effective mental health services. This session many committees have heard numerous mental health service providers, professionals and caregivers speak on the dire need for more private and public mental health services in our state and the reasons we don't have more. My concerns with this bill is as follows:

1. Who will conduct these assessments? It is unclear in the language of this Bill, as presented.
2. What are they looking for?
  - a. Who are they trying to identify?
3. Who writes this assessment?
4. Who is responsible for the follow-up care?
5. As this Bill is written we don't know if the results are confidential. All we do know is that the BOE will be receiving confirmation that it occurred. Not knowing also if school personnel are the screeners.

6. In addition, the form is yet to be written and the screening method yet to be determined.
7. These assessments will be conducted on growing, changing children.
8. The BOE in our district has specifically stated that they are not to diagnose issues. In fact, this form will diagnose and label a child.

(That section 10-206 of the general statutes be amended to require (1) each pupil enrolled in public school at grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 and each home-schooled child at ages 12, 14 and 17 to have a confidential behavioral health assessment, the results of which shall be disclosed only to the child's parent or guardian, and (2) each health care provider performing a child's behavioral health assessment to complete the appropriate form supplied by the State Board of Education verifying that the child has received the assessment.)

I appreciate your serious consideration of these matters as presented. We all want what's best for our children and state.