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March 13, 20013

: Representative Susan Johnson and Senator Terry Gerratana,
and members of the Committee

I am writing to you today as a member of the Windham Board of Education for the past 28 years, as the chairperson of the Windham School Based Health Center Advisory Committee and as a grandparent raising three of her grandchildren.

I am very concerned about DPH removing the funding for new School based Health Centers.

We currently have two health centers in our schools, one in the high school and one in our middle school. Both have significantly impacted the health and wellbeing of our students.

I have chaired the school based health committee from its inception and have seen it grow and provide not only the physical healthcare needed, but the mental health care lacking in many communities. Our program has 991 students enrolled at the middle school and has provided over 2,885 visits and more than half have been for mental health issues.

A few years ago I spearheaded getting a magnet school into our community. It was not an easy task but it was accomplished. The Charles H Barrows Stem Academy will be opening this fall. As I am sure you are aware 75% of the students will be students from the Windham Community. As all Alliance districts, the needs of our children are significant and must be addressed to allow them to come to school ready and able to learn.

After raising 8 children I am now raising three boys, ages 15, 12 and 6. As I am sure you will agree it is a very different environment that these children are growing up in. I am working full time and knowing that my children have the opportunity to be seen by a nurse practitioner and a social worker when they need to puts me at ease.

This is not the time to eliminate programs that will help schools systems such as ours to raise test scores and to help the neediest children in our state grow up to become successful and well-adjusted adults.

