

Finn SB374

Dear Senators and Representatives,

My name is Dr. Thomas Finn, a resident of Southington where I have worked as a CT State licensed Psychologist for 28 years and where my wife and I have raised 3 children. I am writing in opposition to S.B. 374.

I have several significant concerns with this proposed bill:

1. This bill would require the Public Education system to provide a mental health service. Our educational system is not chartered to provide mental health services.

2. The science of "behavioral health assessments" is, sadly, less than reliable, and assessment tools are designed to be one small component of a broad assessment implemented by competent, well-trained and experienced mental health professionals who are seeking to answer specific questions about a child's development and mental health status. They are not designed for mass administration and interpretation in any way, shape or form. To attempt to use psychological instruments in ways other than designed is highly unethical and would open our school districts and their staff to countless lawsuits.

3. Psychological tests produce information that is federally protected under HIPPA laws which require parental consent for their collection and release and this bill contradicts previously established health information rules.

4. Obtaining assessment of children's behavioral and emotional functioning is the right and responsibility of parents and guardians whose informed consent is required for a school district to administer psychological and behavioral testing. This bill undercuts this right and responsibility and subverts this informed consent.

I urge you to vote against S.B. 374. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Finn

225 Rockwood Dr.

Southington, CT 06489

860-621-7858