

To the Committee of the Proposed Bill No. 374

As a father of two daughters, a grandfather of 3 granddaughters, an ordained minister and a Marriage and Family Therapist, I have some real concerns about proposed bill No. 374 on multiple levels that I have chosen to put into a series of questions.

The first set of questions is regarding finances.

- Who is going to pay for the assessments that will need to be done every year?
- Will it be passed on the parents, the schools the State?
- Where is the money coming from when town and school budgets are already stretched thin?
- Are you not creating a whole new industry with money that we don't have?

The second set of questions is regarding the Behavioral Health Assessment Form.

- It's my understanding that there are a number of different Behavioral Health Assessments. Is there a test already picked out? If yes, what one?
- If no, who will write up the assessment?
- How is it decided what questions will be on the test?
- Will there be a uniform test given to all the children?
- Who sets the standards of what a behavioral healthy child looks like?
- Will there be a comparison of a child's assessment from grade to grade?
- Who does this comparison? If there is, does this mean that someone else other than the parents will see the results?
- Will there be a data base where the results will be compiled?
- Who will do this?

The third set of questions is regarding Outcomes.

- What happens to children who fail it or are seen at-risk?
- Is a child's poor performance on the assessment grounds for removing him/her from the home?
- What services are in place to help the children who perform poorly?
- To whom is it reported that a child is acting out at risk behaviors (parents, teachers, school counselors and psychologist, DCF)?

The fourth set of questions is regarding the purpose of the assessment

- My understanding of these assessments is that they are usually administered to individual who are exhibiting at-risk behaviors. Are there certain at-risk behaviors that you are looking for? Don't you think that the teachers who work with the students would have a better grasp of those children who are at-risk.
- Is there any test that we can give that will identify an Adam Lanza?
- What's the likelihood that a test will produce false positives in regards to at-risk behavior?

- If at-risk behavior should be indicated by the assessment results, will it remain true that only the parents will receive the results?
- What happens to a student who has been raised in a certain belief system with values and morals that are contrary to the one who administers the assessment and the administrator determines that the students beliefs could lead to behavior that they deem unfitting?

In what you have proposed through Bill No. 374, you have not given the reason for why you are proposing this bill. To what ends will it serve?

In conversation with individuals in my own town, none of them were even aware that this bill was being proposed both in the school system as well as town workers. Is this a case of the government trying to put themselves in areas that they should not be involved in? In an article written by one of the mothers from Newtown not only strongly objected to this bill, but indicated that parents in their own town were unaware of this bill.

Maybe it's time to let our schools do what we have asked them to do, educate our children and stop trying to impose more programs and tests that take away from what they are to do.

*Jonas Volkmann*