

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select  
For HB 98

Compiled on: Monday, March 20, 2023 10:34 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

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Hearing Date: March 20, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Anita Kegley  
Church and Politics  
San Antonio, TX

We are totally against this bill in it's entirety. Parents are in charge of their children's health decisions, not the school's authority. We need less Government involvement and more Parent Empowerment when it comes to children's care.

Mary LaVeau  
Parents and grandparents  
Austin, TX

The government does not have the right to our children. This bill would open up our children to being screened and possibly treated without our knowledge. Even if it says parental consent is necessary, it doesn't mean a child's records couldn't be looked at and then decided by some individual that some type of mental health treatment is needed. This is a way to indoctrinate children to ideologies that do not align with their parents. CRT, gender theories and Social/emotional learning should not be taught in schools. Schools need to go back to teaching the basics or parents will withdraw their children and the public school system will fail. Let's make schools great again by keeping government and medicine out!

Stacy Penney, Precinct Chair  
N/A  
MANSFIELD, TX

Please note against this Bill. Parents are responsible for a child's wellbeing. The school districts have no business doing so, especially having to do with Medicaid funds.

Debra McClure, Ms.

Self

Austin, TX

Hello,

While this Bill may have good intentions, it is a definite conflict of interest to have schools get reimbursed for Medicaid services. Too many students are already easily labeled in terms of "needing" counseling services. It would thus benefit schools financially to offer more mental health services on campus. Schools should strictly focus on academics and leave mental health services to third parties. I know the intentions are meant to benefit students, but I really think this could create unforeseen problems. Again, it is also a conflict of interest in my opinion. If the districts should be reimbursed for anything, it should be for bringing in third party reading and math tutoring services to help school address the huge deficiencies in these two areas. Thank you.

Fern Mossman

Self

PROSPER, TX

I do not support this HB98 nor SB 113

It would give Medicaid another revenue stream for schools which creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome.

Although the Senate author amended his bill to include parental consent, this amendment is meaningless as noted below.

There are very real privacy concerns. According to the Texas School Safety Center, "Generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)."

The truth is that schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. What the bill changes is that it allows schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school.

Additionally, the Senate bill talked about amending it to also allow private providers access to school students. This is not good.

Please vote against HB 98

Thank you,

Fern Mossman

Linda Taylor

Self, Retired

Friendswood, TX

It does not prevent the school district from scouring their records to find kids to deliver services to. And, the very fact that Medicaid would mean another revenue stream for schools creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome. Schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. This bill would allow schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school. I am very much against this bill.

Michelle Enman

Self—teacher

San Antonio, TX

School districts should not be allowed to become Medicaid facilities and distributers. This will bypass parental rights in approval for services in their children's private medical and psychiatric health. NO!!!

No to HB98. It's another money grab by public schools at the expense of students and their families!

Lisa Smith

Self

Plano, TX

I oppose this bill. I do not want to see mental healthcare services on our school campuses. Let's stick to teaching our children to read, write, and do math, and get them up to speed after the lockdown. We have children who were kindergartners during the lockdown, and can't read today! Let's fix that. Mental healthcare doesn't belong in our schools! Leave that up to the parents to seek professional help by the real professionals, and not in our schools!

Jan Lohmann, Dr

Self

Plano, TX

I think the schools need to stick with academics. These children are spending too many hours on iPads. They feel disconnected from their teachers and need the interaction that comes with classroom teaching. There is no correlation between the amount of money spent on academic outcomes, so please don't just throw more money at this, fix the problem by limiting the number of the hours that teachers can employ the iPads or other media. Thank you.

Mattie Sweeney, Mrs

Self

Crowley, TX

I am opposed to mental healthcare in our schools. The focus should be put on reading, writing, math, and science! Build these kids up by preparing them for college and life! Mental healthcare should be between the child, parents, and the child's doctor. School faculty and staff are not mental health professionals and this type of service should be private and not at the schools.

Stacy Penney, Precinct Chair Tarrant County

Self, Realtor

MANSFIELD, TX

Vote against this! The job of school districts is to educate children, not be their healthcare provider!

darrell forster

Dairy Queen of Tyler, Inc.

Tyler, TX

I oppose HB98 . I don't want schools to have Medicaid funding. I am concerned about privacy.

Lynda Haltom

Concerned citizen

Colleyville, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. This is just another way for the government to exploit and abuse children for monetary gain.

Anna Bartosh

self, retired teacher

San Angelo, TX

Strongly am against HB 98.

Dr. Dwayne Collins

President Van Zandt Co. Republican Club

Ben Wheeler, TX

Schools do not need to be in the Medicaid program.

Ken Fred  
Self  
Smithville, TX

I very strongly oppose HB98. Our Texas public schools have plenty of educational challenges that need to be addressed without adding another distraction from educating Texas kids. Do NOT make schools medical providers. This has to be one of the worst ideas ever to be proposed for our school system.

I urge you to kill this awful bill!

Thank you,  
Ken Fred

MaryAnne Aiken  
Myself  
Flint, TX

We do not need on campus mental health services. No Medicaid without parents permission.  
VOTE NO ON HB98!!

Sandi Lucas  
Self  
Refugio, TX

I stand in strong opposition to HB 98. I do not want Texas children unnecessarily screened and surveyed for "mental health" issues and then followed up by surrogate "Medicaid" providers, aka, public schools, who stand to gain from whatever is determined. With or without parental consent, this is not the role of public education.

MaryAnne Aiken  
Myself  
Flint, TX

VOTE NO FOR HB98!!

William Aiken  
Myself  
Flint, TX

VOTE NO ON HB 98!!

Sherry Barnes  
Self  
Whitehouse, TX  
Against this bill

Donna Goodwin, Mrs.  
MyGodLovingFamily  
Tyler, TX

Please DO NOT pass, in whole or in part, the HB 98!! Nor any portion of its Senate Bill counterpart!! The role of the school is to educate our children.

We need NO MORE government intervention into our private lives nor into the lives of our children.

Respectfully, Donna Goodwin. Tyler Texas.

Jeff Mcclarty  
Self  
Fredericksburg, TX

Vote NO  
Keep medicaid out of schools,  
Try something else like telling these kids God's loves them .

Nikki Caines  
Self  
Kerrville, TX

The purpose of school districts is not to become involved with Medicaid, with or without parental consent. Children in crisis at school have always been handled by reaching out to parents with recommendations, thus keeping the school's sphere of influence limited. Please keep these entities separate & vote No.

Selina Martin  
Families for education  
Allen, TX

Schools are for learning, we cannot allow medical services on school campuses.  
Absolutely no

Cindy Simpson  
Self, retired  
Pearland, TX

I am AGAINST HB98 because school districts should not be Medicaid providers and should not be allowed to contract for mental health services at school.

Jennifer Kratky  
self, homemaker  
Magnolia, TX

I oppose this bill. I want our schools focused on academics. I have had a few experiences with school counselors that cause me to no longer trust them. They are turning kids against their parents and I can give examples. Where is the concrete proof that all this spending on mental health has improved anything? It hasn't! Please don't monetize and further empower them.

James McMenamy  
Self Lawyer  
Dallas, TX

HB98 is still another law designed to interfere with parents rights and responsibilities of raising their children, by an interfering state/federal govt action. An aside: why would any Senator or representative sponsor such a bill? Contributions from a school administration that wants to be paid bonuses from medical providers!

Robin Kedroske  
Self I'm a parent & a Nanny  
HOUSTON, TX

This Is REDICULOUS!! We have FAILING SCHOOLS EveryWhere (my school district HISD just got taken over by the State because of their Failures) but now you want schools to become "medicaid providers" Again Reduculous! Let schools go back to the FUNDAMENTALS: Reading, Writing & Arithmetic cuz they Can't/Aren't doing that right But you want to Add More??!!! lol "legislators" better WakeUP & Start listening to Parents & tune Out the Kooks!

Christina Drewry

self

Flint, TX

I oppose this bill. The school district is not the parent and they are not responsible for a minor's mental health. School districts are only responsible to teach minors. The parent is responsible for providing outlets for their child to improve their mental health. Bringing Medicaid into the school incentivizes the school to find more "patients" and generate a revenue stream. Keep the schools out of healthcare and healthcare out of the schools.

Carolyn Lux

Self, Retired RN

Fredericksburg, TX

I am against passage of this bill. Having on-campus mental health services reimbursed under Medicaid is directly connected the CDC's Whole Child plan which further drives the agenda towards state control of children, lessening of parental authority and escalates the Social Emotional Learning agenda of the Whole Child initiative of making good "global citizens" of our children. Furthermore, have these programs in schools allows for data mining of our children in order to provide information to insert other "needs" into the schools. This data can be skewed any which way the powers that be might see fit to fit the working narrative of the administrators of these programs. The screening of our children's mental attitude on any given day will result in unnecessary referrals for mental health counseling or other services that can prove injurious to the child, such as suggestions that the child might be suffering from gender dysphoria when he is just having situational depression or anxiety which, when left alone, will resolve with no intervention at all. These counselors often bring into the office their own ideology which might be at odds with the parents' values and principles. This can create confusion in a young child's psyche. I urge you to withdraw this harmful bill. Thank you.

Audrey Warner

self / retired

Conroe, TX, TX

Let's get our schools back to the job of educating the basics. Get the schools out of the mental health, physical health and any other "service", just teach the 3Rs, as the old saying goes. This sort of provision allows and encourages assessments, screenings and well-being checks or mental health content built into lessons. Few, if any teachers, are qualified and certainly are not licenses to perform these services. The district should not be able to monetize these activities by becoming a Medicaid provider, and then provide services for whatever they "find". Even with parental approval it will not prevent a district from scouring a child's records to find children to deliver services to. And, we certainly do not want private providers accessing our children through the school. This is a BAD BILL - please vote NO

Sylvia Campbell

self, retired

The Woodlands, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I love this bill! We know that children are suffering from mental health disorders at an alarming rate. This bill will be a vehicle to bring mental health treatment right to the students. Please support HB 98.

Thank you,

Sylvia Campbell

Roy Holton, Constituant

Convention of StatesTexas, Volunteer

Denton, TX

I am opposed to HB98 .

Daniel OShea  
Pairodiceranch  
PITTSBURG, TX

I am strongly opposed to this Bill

Kim Selensky, Mrs.  
Self  
Paradise, TX

I do not support this bill. Schools should not be monetized to provide mental health services. The school system is supposed to be educating our students not providing medical services.

Rich / Angela Kelley, Dr.  
Self Retired Scientist  
Palestine, TX

We are concerned about school districts becoming Medicaid providers for mental health services. There is an obvious conflict of interest that cannot be overcome because Medicaid money would provide school districts another income stream. Schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health entities and private providers. There are serious privacy concerns. Please oppose HB 98. Thank you for your attention to our viewpoint.

Charles Cooper  
Families Engaged  
Joshua, TX

Please DO NOT consider on-campus mental health services to be provided by school districts. Texas is turning Educators and the profession into "jack of all trades, masters of none" and each and every time something is added to the table of the schools their core mission slips more and more. As complex and sensitive as Mental Health is, and the cultural differences in its application would ONLY result in a disastrous scenario. There is already increasing disconnect between students' guardians and the public school system, this would only make that worse. The more services you ADD to the failing public education system, the faster you accelerate its implosion. 100% of the focus needs to be on limiting educators responsibilities to ANYTHING beyond core mission. Education standards are continually adjusted downward to compensate for the already failing system and the House and Senate need to pivot to REMOVING tasks and obligations of our educators so they can REFOCUS on core mission. Until their core mission is mastered all additional services should be seriously limited or removed from the responsibility of the public education system. We are at a point where public education is the equivalent to DMV quality customer service and it is only getting worse. Administrative bloat at the expense of the individual educator needs to reverse course. This type of effort and expense should be re-allocated to FIXING the existing problems NOT looking for another diagnosis to explain away the failing of the public school system. One of two outcomes will happen, both are HORRIBLE. 1 - Diagnosis will be masked, at the expense of appropriate treatment to "make schools look better" than they are (see MOUs and ISD Police Departments on how things are by policy NON\_reportable), OR, diagnosis would be sought after due to potential increased funding per child who is classified and labeled as a mental health patient. Both are bad, neither result in better outcomes for individuals with true mental health needs or core mission learner outcomes. Thank you for your time

Linda Bellomy  
self  
Ovilla, TX

This is not a function of education. It is the responsibility and the privilege of the parents to take care of their children's medical needs.

The very fact that Medicaid would mean another revenue stream for schools creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome.

There are also very real privacy concerns.

Please do all you can to work against this very bad bill.

Taylor Duncan  
Self  
Wilson, TX

This bill poses a potential threat to parent's rights and could impact students in a negative way without adequate vetting of medical professionals employed by the state.

Susan Christenson  
Allen PAC  
Allen, TX

I do not think this should be a function of the school and do not support.

Mary Mabry  
Self  
Spring, TX

As a public high school teacher, I saw how overwhelmed school counselors were—unable to truly counsel some students due to responsibility for schedules, credits, graduation issues, and more. HB 98 seeks to help address the increasing mental health needs in our schools. We can't ignore school shootings, rampant anxiety, and alienation experienced by some students. Please vote for this bill.

Samantha Smith  
Retired  
Van, TX

AGAINST HB 98 -

I stand firmly AGAINST allowing school districts to become Medicaid providers and contract for mental health services at school

Brenda Jones  
Self  
LLANO, TX

The schools should not be allowed to provide medicaid. Schools are to be academic not provide medicaid! Teach the children their writing, reading and arithmetic. Get back to basics so they can have a good educational foundation.

Edith McCanless  
Self / Housewife  
Fredericksburg, TX

I am for protecting and educating children, and I am strongly opposed to having the government get further involved in public education--especially and including mental health. Families, churches, and communities have the responsibility and ability to care for their children...and the children will be immensely better off being cared for locally than bureaucratically. Please, no additional government money, entanglement, oversight; however well-intended it will cause more harm than good.

Nikki Sopchak  
self  
Granbury, TX

I strongly urge a vote of "No" on this bill (HB 98), this is giving school districts powers that go way beyond their scope and purpose of educating children and it is an affront to parental rights. This is a dangerous proposition as "mental health services" are very subjective. School districts have already shown an alarming capacity to inflict harm on children while simultaneously failing to perform the basic tasks for which they were created. School districts need to focus their efforts on effectively teaching basic reading, math and writing competency.

Marisa Williams  
self, SAHM  
McKinney, TX

Although I appreciate that students come to school with a variety of experiences that can lead some to struggling to focus on their studies, it is critical that this is handled outside of school. It is the responsibility of the legal custodians to ensure that the students are under the care and supervision of a physician. Any and all mental health support should be handled outside of school. I request that all vote against SB 98. Thank you.

Beverly Moran, Mrs.  
Self  
Kingsland, TX

This would affectively let the "State" control our children's health information and allow mental health services be provided without Parents knowledge in some cases I will bet! NO WAY are we going to agree to letting the STATE take over control of our children's mental health concerns and be paid for it by my tax dollars.

Tracy Gurley  
Myself  
Sunrise Beach, TX

I do not agree with this bill that would allow medicaid services in our public schools.

John Moran  
Self  
Kingsland, TX

I am retired and old enough to remember when Schools used to just teach our children useful information (Math, Reading, Science...) and didn't use Schools for indoctrination or health assessments. For the sake of our grandchildren, I want to oppose this HB98 Bill. My tax money going to assess Mental Health of children is ridiculous, to say the least, much less having the State being paid to control our children and parents decisions. Vote NO!

Jennifer Mathews  
Self - mother  
Porter, TX

I am against the is bill. It is a gross violation of parents' rights. Even with the proposed senate amendment to "require parental consent" there is talking of letting third parties have access to this data, which shouldn't even be proposed.

The very fact that Medicaid would mean another revenue stream for schools creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome.

There are also very real privacy concerns. According to the Texas School Safety Center, "Generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)."

Please vote against this awful bill and in favor of parental rights. PARENTS MATTER!

Shelly Smyth  
Self  
Tyler, TX

Mental health and all other health services should be the parents' responsibility--not the school district's...

Laura Weaver  
retired/self  
The Woodlands, TX

Protecting the mental health of Texas children is an important goal we should all be working toward. With 98% of Texas schools unable to meet the TEA recommended counselor-student ratio and rising issues around youth mental health and suicide, HB 98 could help students who are unable to afford help through private channels. Getting funding to use community resources through the School Health and Related Services program, as other states have done, is an affordable and proven way to help our children thrive. Please support HB 98.

Merlin & Jean Westbrook  
Self  
Wills Point, TX

Re: HB98 We strongly oppose.

Hilliard Brittain  
Self  
Garland, TX

I believe a school district has no business providing on-campus mental health services, much less being a Medicaid provider. Only a parent should determine if, when, or how their child receives mental health services. Please reject HB96! Thank you.

Larissa Mears  
self/HEB shopper  
Leander, TX

I'm in support of keeping mental health services OUT of the public education system, which includes keeping Medicaid out of the public education system. I DO NOT SUPPORT HB98.

Why?

#1) I have a child who experienced a traumatic event. In one of her public education system classes (Avid) the topic of the traumatic event came up in her class. Instantly she had a panic attack and thankfully one of her friends recognized this. Her friend told the teacher, and my daughter left the class. The issue with bringing up someone's possible past amongst their peers is what will the reaction of the victim be? This is an issue. My child did not as was not ready to speak on this issue as it happened to her. This could be the same situation another child could get into relating to mental health. My child received outside services and as parents we made this a priority. Kids get easily embarrassed about being pulled out of class and are questioned often, by their peers, about why as well. 1A. Concerns of schools or state agencies making choices without parent consent (Medicating Amanda/motherjones.com)

#2) Time and time again if there is little to no parent involvement with their child the student will not succeed in academics, but they will also not succeed in mental health care. I have a friend whose daughter has mental health issues who have very involved parents and receive plenty of mental health care with minimal good results.

#3) The expense. From what I have read and researched most programs fail because they're so expensive that these types of programs don't last. Not cost effective for long term mental health disorders

#4) ? Medicaid in my opinion is a failed program within itself. Question coverage on medication. In my experience most Medicaid clients do not get what they truly need. Programs such as Snap is a prime example. Snap allows reduced costs on unhealthy food. In my opinion snap should not allow a snap beneficiary any allowance on unhealthy food.

#5) Treatment doesn't always mean someone is going to get better. My friend's child is a prime example. How about the treatment, not able to help at all.

#6) Not very great treatment options. Neg. Side effects of medications. (Mass shooters ex.) on psych meds. (cchrint.org) Psychiatric Drugs: School Shootings And Other Acts of Senseless Violence

#7) Research shows physical health equals positive mental health. All children need to be involved with sports/physical activities. More options for non-athletic students?

#8) The Public Education System mission is "Education" not "Social" justice. Our Public Education System is so far off track with providing high academic standards therefore not providing well performing academic students.

#9) Financial gains- who benefits from having more direct access to mental health? Pharmaceutical companies etc.

Thank you,

Larissa Mears  
801 Mallard Lake Tr.  
Leander, TX 78641  
lmearspta@yahoo.com

Rebekah Adams  
Parent of school-age children  
MCKINNEY, TX

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!

Sarah Reichardt  
Self - implementation  
Keller, TX

I oppose the expansion of mental health medical services on school campuses K-12

Cathy Stroud, Retired teacher  
Cooke County Conservatives  
Gainesville, TX

I am totally against our school districts becoming a place for mental health services under Medicare. This is not the place for this. Our schools need to concentrate on Reading, writing and math and certainly not mental health. Leave that job to the family to take care of if needed. This could easily be used to unfairly categorize and/or penalize children. Vote NO and influence others to do the same. Thank you for being a public servant in our great state,

Penny Bradshaw, N/A  
Retired  
Spring, TX

To: All members of the House Youth Health and Safety Committee:

I am writing IN SUPPORT OF HB 98 which will allow public schools to contract with mental health authorities to provide services to eligible students and BE REIMBURSED THROUGH MEDICAID. This bill is endorsed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Texas Care for Children and Equality Texas.

This bill is more important than ever in light of continued school shootings, suicide and the rising rate of mental health services needed by students of all ages. It is unconscionable that 98% of Texas schools do not meet the TEA recommended ratio of school counselors to students, leaving millions of students without mental health services.

Apri Kerze  
Self, Engineer  
SPRING, TX

As a Texas resident and parent of 2 kids in public schools, I am strongly against HB98 which would allow school districts to become Medicaid providers and contract for mental health services at school. Our schools are losing sight of their primary purpose: to teach students core competencies in reading and math. Academics should be the primary focus of public schools. Schools are not medical facilities and should not be providing medical services. Schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers - schools do not need to be Medicaid providers which allows them to monetize the provision of mental health services in school. Medicaid would be another revenue stream for schools, creating a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome. Additionally, this bill creates privacy concerns for students as HIPPA generally does not apply to school records. Again, please oppose this bill as it does nothing for our students academically and offers no additional medical services that are not already available via third parties.

Candy Peak Ross  
Self  
Frisco, TX

I am against this bill. Since America has replaced religious principles, i.e. religious morals and ethics taught in past generations in schools and society, with psychology and psychiatry, America has become a mess as a society. Psychology is full of false technologies and information. Psychology as used today is introverting, gives people wrong indications, and omits essential spiritual principles in its teaching and therapies. Furthermore, antisocial authorities in Russian and Germany used Psychology to manipulate, control and degrade members of those societies. Much of those same misbegotten principles have been brought into American society, and has caused societal disorder. Study that history of Psychology as used in Communist countries. When Psychology is used in a society, that society will decline. Texas made a big mistake to insert such wrong and degraded technologies into American society. Just look at America's statistics. Compare the moral values used to embrace and the health of that American society, to today's lost Americans who had free sex, drugs, false information and endless psychoanalysis run on the newer American people. America is destroyed now for applying bogus Psychological theories and teachings.

Kristie Wong  
Self, parent  
Frankston, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. It does not prevent the school district from scouring children's records to find kids to deliver services to.

Further, the author of the Senate bill talked about amending it to also allow private providers access to school students. This is a very real privacy concern.

The very fact that Medicaid would mean another revenue stream for schools creates a conflict of interest.

I do not want a social-emotional dashboard kept on my child.

John Murray  
self parent  
Austin, TX

I am adamantly apposed to HB 98. As a parent I need to be the sole decision maker on mental health services for my children.

Tracy Shannon  
MassResistance TX and self  
Kingwood, TX

I am the Texas Director for MassResistance. I am opposed to HB 98 expanding Medicaid to make school districts providers of mental health care. The Texas Legislature already unwisely spent to create the Child Mental Health Care Consortium (CMHCC) and the consortium has been training its members to provide what they refer to as "pediatric gender-affirming care". The doctors advised the consortium providers not to disclose the status of their child transitioning to their parents. We simply cannot introduce another avenue for children to be inducted into the gender confusion cult via mental health providers, especially at the expense of taxpayers. Students in public schools and private schools that are part of the CMHCC are already at risk of being swept into the school-to-gender clinic pipeline. This bill could potentially increase that risk since there is no language prohibiting any therapy or treatment that furthers the transition of a minor from their biological sex at birth. Children should not be used as tools for fundraising for the district and that is exactly what this bill would enable. It would create the opportunity for school districts to scour the information taken by teachers (that are not reliably accurate) to find students to target for services. This creates a predatory system where districts will be motivated to report red flags in order to create more revenue for their district by providing mental health services to kids. Districts would be motivated to coerce parents to give consent to provide mental health services and those services very well may undermine the values and instruction provided in their homes. Parents already fear telling districts they may not provide services when their child is flagged for interventions for fear of being reported to DFPS.

If we are truly concerned with the state of children's mental health then let's do something meaningful to create the best environment for a child's mental health. Stop treating kids like property of the state on loan to parents for weekends. Create family-friendly policies that enable families to be together more. Provide more time for activities in school for activities that get them outside and moving more. Allow them more time in school for activities that make them want to be at school instead of pumping them full of DEI rubbish. Shorten the days and hours in the schools so children aren't spending time in cold buildings that resemble prisons when they could spend time with parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

It is not the role of the public schools to become the mental health care providers for students. The CMHCC is a good example of good intentions gone wrong with medical schools involved pushing gender-bending pseudoscience which will generate loads of future business to their medical centers.

<https://madmommabear.com/2023/02/27/texas-spends-203-million-to-spread-pediatric-gender-affirming-care-poison>

Heather Daoust

Self, citizen, mother

Dripping Springs, TX

Please do not pass or support this bill. Our children are becoming wards of the state. They attend school; they do not live there. The schools should stick with education, not act as institutes forcing services outside of their "jurisdiction". We are Texas. We are a conservative state that believes in parents' rights, or so I thought. This bill will pit parents against school faculty bc it will be the schools, i.e. government employees, making medical decisions, rather than parents. This is a very slippery slope headed in the direction away from parents' rights and the safety of children. I can't believe that our state is supporting a bill that would lead toward more indoctrination and manipulation of our children. Do what's right!! Do not pass this.

Ally Raskin

Self

Dallas, TX

There is too much risk of privacy infringement and government overreach they way this bill is currently written. Some districts are already selling our children's data without parental consent. (Dallas ISD for instance)

Karla Oquin

Self; Legal Assistant

San Angelo, TX

I am against HB98. Why should the school district be enrolled as a provider under the medial assistance program,as this bill advocates? The school district is not the provider; the local mental health authority would be the provider. The more federal money the school district takes, the more rules of the federal government the school district has to follow.

Please do not pass HB98.

CHRISTIANA KEELER

Self

Austin, TX

I am AGAINST HB 98 - Texas Schools need to only focus on true education.

There are very real privacy concerns. The Texas School Safety Center, "Generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)."

The truth is that schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. What this bill changes is that it allows schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school.

Do not take advantage of the children to monetize their health!

Charlene Reagan

Self and True Texas Project

SPICEWOOD, TX

I am AGAINST HB98.

Public Schools do not need to be in the business of providing Medicaid services and receiving reimbursement for their services thereof. The job of our public school system is to provide an excellent education in reading, writing, arithmetic, and history. Schools are not and should not ever be the purveyors of mental health assessments, or medical/medicaid services.

Dave Keeler

Self

Austin, TX

AGAINST HB 98

I am AGAINST HB 98 - The parents should be the only people to oversee our child's healthcare needs and decisions!

There are very real privacy concerns. The Texas School Safety Center, “Generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).”

The truth is that schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. What this bill changes is that it allows schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school.

Patsy Watts

self

Irving, TX

I am strongly opposing this amendment. School districts should not be given any additional control over the privacy and health of students.

Philip Belz  
self  
Arlington, TX

I am commenting on HB 98 largely due to this bill allowing school districts to become Medicaid providers and contract for mental health services at school.

Over the past few years I have been disappointed watching my child being inundated with assessments, screeners, “well-being checks,” and mental health content built into lessons?

Additionally, I can see that this is going in the direction where the school district is keeping a social-emotional dashboard of my child.

With these changes our school districts will be able to monetize all that activity by becoming a Medicaid provider and then providing services to address what they are finding. Whether it is intended or not, this would be the effect of HB98 and its Senate Companion SB113, which was heard in Senate Education on March 15.

While the Senate author amended his bill to include parental consent, this amendment is meaningless. It does not prevent the school district from scouring their records to find kids to deliver services to.

Further, the author of the Senate bill talked about amending it to also allow private providers access to school students.

The very fact that Medicaid would mean another revenue stream for schools creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome.

There are also very real privacy concerns. According to the Texas School Safety Center, “Generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).”

This Bill should not pass as it leads to major conflicts of interest and leads to our children being a commodity where their data is monetized and the school districts impose too much into the healthcare and emotional well-being of my child, which is the parental authority and responsibility.

I ask that you vote no on HB98.

Debi Scaggs, Mrs.  
Self  
Denton, TX

It is not good that the education system has began collecting data on the social-emotion status of children and now with the potential to connect that with Medicare, it would create a conflict of interest. The education department and the health Department need to be kept separate for a variety of reason. The potential for abuse is great. The education system in the Texas is not doing their primary job well as it is. They need to refocus and better educate our youth. Leave the health and well being to the parents and the health department. Please vote NO to this bill.

Ann Graesser  
Self  
Katy, TX

Parents, not schools, should be making decisions for children when it comes to the physical and mental health of children. Please vote no to HB 98.

Tracy Hanes

Self and Families Engaged for Effective Education

Victoria, TX

I am a mother of three children and have been involved in our school district for the past 19 years as a volunteer and local advocate for parents and teachers. I am against HB98 and its companion SB113. Our children are being inundated with assessments, screeners, “well-being checks”, “campus climate checks” and mental health content built into lessons throughout their day. Companies like CASEL which market Social Emotional Learning methodology and Panorama which sells our children’s data to produce algorithms to shape their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and values have littered school districts across Texas. Should the loving responsibility of molding and shaping a child’s character be taken out of the hands of the family and be put into the calculating hands of technology, algorithms and mental health services that wish to capture the market place of our schools? SEL is a \$5.6 billion industry that captures private, sensitive data on children for the purpose of creating a dashboard on behavior. The dashboards are created on every child who completes a survey (this is happening in my school district and across Texas). The dashboards are tied to their student I.D. Are they also tied to their social security number? Is this laying the groundwork for a social credit score which will follow them for the rest of their life? In December of 2022, my local school district of Victoria ISD and Gulf Bend Center announced a school-based mental health community collaborative/partnership at no cost to district families. A VISD Coordinator goes on to say, “VISD is excited to pilot this program. “Our vision is to INCREASE school-based mental health services through community collaboration.”

What are the unintended consequences? Imagine your school district being able to monetize on all the behavioral dashboards by becoming a Medicaid provider and then providing services to address what they are finding. Whether it is intended or not, this would be the effect of HB98 and its Senate Companion SB113. While the Senate author amended his bill to include parental consent, this amendment is meaningless. It does not prevent the school district from scouring their records to find kids to deliver services to. Further, the author of the Senate bill talked about amending it to also allow private providers access to school students. The very fact that Medicaid would mean another revenue stream for schools creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome.

The truth is that schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. What the bill changes is that it allows schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school. Please end the data mining, monetization, and manipulation of our children’s personal information and individual sovereignty under the guise of mental health.

Tracy Hanes

Self and Families Engaged for Effective Education

Victoria, TX

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The truth is that schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. What the bill changes is that it allows schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school. Please end the data mining, monetization, and manipulation of our children's personal information and individual sovereignty under the guise of mental health.

DIAMANTINA ARAUJO

Self

THE WOODLANDS, TX

Against this Bill: School Districts already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. What the bill changes is that it allows schools to be the Medicaid provider so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in school. There are also very real privacy concerns. According to the Texas School Safety Center, "Generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)."

Lisa Webster

Self

The Woodlands, TX

This bill would allow schools to become Medicaid providers so they can monetize the provision of mental health services in the school. This would incentivize schools to refer students for mental health evaluations when they may not necessary. This is a conflict of interest.

Schools should not be involved in the administration of healthcare for their students. Schools should be focused on the business of educating students and stay out of healthcare.

Beverly Roberts

Concerned Women for America of South Texas

Houston, TX

Quit assessing our kids and teach them to read, write and do math! I don't trust all these "medical" interventions.

Janie Brittain  
Self - Retired  
Garland, TX

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB98. HB98 creates a conflict of interest in that it allows schools to make money off of providing mental health services. They already have one of the most important missions in society- the education of tomorrow's leaders. They do not need a competing mission. I FULLY OPPOSE SCHOOLS BECOMING MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS.

Sandy Bagwell  
Self-Analyst  
Lubbock, TX

FOR this bill.

Missie Carra  
Self  
Fort Worth, TX

I oppose HB 98 entirely. Schools do not need to become on site mental health service centers even if a parent gives consent. Please do not proceed with HB 98. Thank you.

Dan O'Loughlin, Ph.D.  
Self - Licensed Psychologist  
Fredericksburg, TX

My name is Dr. Dan O'Loughlin and I am a Texas licensed psychologist. For over 32 years I have been in private practice in Fredericksburg providing family-oriented counseling services to children, teenagers and their parents. During this time, I have interacted regularly with our local private and public school campuses consulting with teachers, counselors, special education personnel and others. I understand the value of school-community collaboration in providing psychological services to school-age youth and their families. Also, I understand the value of maintaining appropriate and necessary service provision boundaries between private and public school systems, families and the community.

I write to you today with concerns for the growing trend toward school-based mental health services for children and teenagers. It appears House Bill No. 98 requests expanded eligibility to include medicaid reimbursement for those student who are not qualified for mental health services as special education students but may receive these services through the school district anyway. For a district to provide school-based mental health services to the general student population appears to be a conflict of interest and a duplication of services in direct competition with community mental health centers, non-profit community social services and private providers.

There are many disadvantages to students, families and the community in school-based mental health services. Foremost, the type of services are limited and the school setting decreases client privacy and confidentiality. School-based services primarily are oriented toward individual treatment involving a relationship between the student and a mental health provider either in-person or through electronic transmission. This treatment modality rarely gets to the 'root causes or solutions' of a student's issues since it excludes parent involvement. Parent-child interactive therapies, family system therapies and collateral parent consultations in my mind are more cost-effective and beneficial to youth in treatment. Children, teenagers and their parents need privacy and guaranteed confidentiality when dealing with personal or family-related mental health matters. The school environment is a social system unto itself with unique norms, communication patterns, and structures all of which are not conducive to affording students or their parents maximum privacy and confidentiality. It is far better for students and their parents to receive mental health services outside the public school system so as to allow them 'neutral ground' to exercise their right to manage mental health and life problems without undue pressure or interference. Overall, the school setting as a location for the provision of mental health services to children and teenagers is not a desirable plan since it undermines student growth, parental authority, family autonomy and community participation.

Susan Perez  
Citizens for Education Reform and myself (Retired Educator)  
Lubbock, TX

I am AGAINST HB 98. Schools should NOT become Medicaid providers or contract for mental health services.

This could be an open door to allowing Planned Parenthood access to our school children.

Contracting for Mental Health Services is a way to have government schools be all pervasive in our children's lives. (See The Mind Polluters Documentary.) Also, children are being inundated with mental health surveys that ask invasive questions that are confusing them and giving children anxiety. These surveys could indicate INACCURATELY that a child has mental health issues only because of the wording of the questions. These surveys don't offer 'NO' or 'NONE' as a choice to the multiple choice questions.

This also could be a HIPPA violation. It could allow school personnel to look for vulnerable children, track them, and categorized them without parental authorization or consent.

Terri Hall  
self  
Kerrville, TX

School districts are already conducting "mental health" assessments on kids, tracking them, collecting data and sometimes selling the data to outside groups. This bill wants to allow the school district to be a Medicaid provider for mental health services, which would allow them to monetize the mental health services they are providing. As a concerned parent, I don't want schools to completely take over every aspect of our children's lives.

Sec.A38.038.REIMBURSEMENT UNDER MEDICAID. The Health and Human Services Commission shall allow a school district to enroll as a provider under the medical assistance program under Chapter 32, Human Resources Code, to provide and receive reimbursement for the provision of mental health services to district students who are medical assistance recipients.

The job of school districts is to educate children, not be their healthcare provider!

Sylvia Cardenas  
Self  
Kilgore, TX

I am for HB98. SHARS covering mental health services in the school would help children get the care they need.

Fran Rhodes, President  
True Texas Project  
Fort Worth, TX

We are very much opposed to this legislation! Schools are not medical providers and should not be medical providers. Schools need to focus on educating children and leave the medical decisions to the parents. Schools already have the ability to partner with mental health providers and they should not be allowed to monetize it. It raised questions of HIPPA privacy of students records, and creates an additional layer of bureaucracy that schools will have to deal with. Not a good idea at all!

Ashley Cole, Mrs.  
self and teacher  
Fort Worth, TX

For, This bill adds school mental healthcare to what SHARS billing covers

Carol Ortiz, Ms.  
Self/retired  
Montgomery, TX

Please support the passage of HB 98. Ninety-eight percent of Texas school are under compliance with TEA recommended counselor to student ratio. This bill would provide necessary services for many students affected by recent school shootings and the rising rate of mental health issues and suicide.

Kathy Davenport  
Self  
Ft Worth, TX

Schools need to stay out of the mental health business. It's become too political and pushes a far left social agenda on immature children. Schools are not healthcare facilities and should never be allowed to practice mental or physical health services other than emergency nursing care until parents or EMS is notified. They should not be allowed to do mental or health referrals either. Definitely no Medicaid funds. This is a BIG NO.

Carolyn Parmer  
self  
Austin, TX

Please vote FOR this bill. Thank you.

Kelly West  
Self—mother  
Savannah, TX

A school should not be considered a medical establishment and should not be receiving money as if they were. Medical services for a child should be the responsibility of the parent, not a school. Today's schools do not have the best interest of the child in mind like a parent does. This is not "parent's choice" like the governor has been pressing so hard for. Schools are for teaching not for medical services. Leave them be as 2 separate entities.

Vickie Bass  
Grassroots America We the People  
Brownsboro, TX

This bill is intrusive to students and merely another way for Medicaid to be expanded. Mental and health freedom means privacy. When the Government is involved in anything it becomes a bureaucracy of waste, civil rights abuse and taxpayer theft.

Edward Culham

Self / Attorney

Anna, TX

Good day, I want to comment my OPPOSITION to HB 98. Texas Public Schools have already suffered enough at the hands of federal government directives. Tying them further to Washington - especially under the Biden administration - is a terrible idea. At a time when Washington has been documented over and over again in support of brainwashing children into believing they are the wrong sex, and at a time when psychiatrists and teachers have been caught - or have bragged on tiktok - regarding teaching this horrific ideology to children, the last thing Texas Public Schools needs is to be more beholden to an administration pushing such a monstrous ideology.

Joe Biden recently called it "close to sinful" to NOT sexually abuse children via trans-ideology and trans-surgery. That is the man ultimately in charge of funding Medicaid. And this is the man who will ultimately gain more control over Texas Public Schools if this bill passes.

It is not difficult to find a child a medicaid doctor. It is not that hard to find medicaid specialists for children. Finding medicaid help for adults in Texas can be difficult. This is NOT the case for children. There is no NEED to have school become a medicaid resource for children, because there are many available already.

In conclusion: First, this bill is BAD because it would give more control over Texas Public Schools to an administration in Washington that is PROUD of its desire to brainwash and mutilate Texas Public Schoolchildren. Second, this bill is UNNECESSARY because children in Texas already have AMPLE options available regarding medicaid providers. As such, I hope my comment will be read, considered, and heeded regarding OPPOSING HB98. Thank you.

Shannon Hoffman

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Austin, TX

House Bill 98 would allow school districts to receive reimbursement for delivering behavioral health services. Texas schools are only able to receive reimbursement if services are required through a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). In 2014, CMS issued guidance allowing states more flexibility in their school-based Medicaid programs. This flexibility allows school districts to bill Medicaid for health services delivered to all Medicaid-enrolled children.

Over the past two decades, rates of Texan children who have felt hopeless, struggled with anxiety or depression, and experienced suicidal ideation have been rising. For a student experiencing trauma, stress, or other difficult life events, learning can be challenging. Integration of mental health into schools can encourage normalizing discussions, and increase access to care and early identification, especially in rural schools where mental health resources are often scarcer. Mental health in schools are related to increased test scores, commitment to school, attendance, grades, and graduation rates, while improving truancy and disciplinary rates.

As a counselor, I worked with teenagers in residential treatment for behavioral health. In one instance, a young man had an outburst in the classroom seemingly for no reason. However, a word problem described a child getting reprimanded for not cleaning his room, which triggered a memory of his father physically abusing him for the same behavior. His reaction was an emotional response to that previous trauma. Because of his access to his counselor, he was able to de-escalate, process his reaction, and return to the classroom to learn. Often, access to mental health support translates into more success at school.??

This recommended change could not only increase access for more children but increase federal revenue to the state and more reimbursement to districts. Schools that already deliver these services using education dollars would be able to free up those resources. In FY 21, 952 school districts billed Medicaid for mental health services. Further, many states across the country have taken advantage of this. As of March 2023, 19 states, including Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina, have extended their school Medicaid programs.

When mental health care is accessed in schools, the child, their family, and their school all benefit. Students spend more time in school, and employers and caregivers are not impacted by missed work. Further, supporting mental health in schools and improving the school's climate leads to teachers feel better supported. A focus on creating schools that provide support for every student's mental health when they need it is imperative to combat the wide array of difficulties our kids face today. The goal should be a more preventative approach—focusing on creating positive school climates and building relationships among students, staff, and the community before crises occur.

Karole Fedrick  
Texas Eagle Forum and Self  
Austin, TX

I am Karole Fedrick submitting these comments on behalf of Texas Eagle Forum and myself asking you to vote against HB98.

While I appreciate Representative Moody's concern for students, schools are not tasked with providing everything to every student. This bill would effectively add a great burden to school districts already overburdened by state requirements that do nothing to provide academic excellence for students.

Per the bill's fiscal analysis;

"HHSC estimates that onetime costs to create a new provider type and manage claims related issues would be \$0.5 million in fiscal year 2024, with ongoing annual costs of \$0.7 million in fiscal year 2025 and on. While there would be a cost associated with adding school districts as Medicaid providers, in addition to the technology updates and training for school districts and LMHAs regarding procedures for Medicaid payment and reimbursement, the fiscal implications of adding and reimbursing for this service cannot be determined at this time."

How much will it cost each district for those technology updates and training for Medicaid payment and reimbursement? Districts are already short-staffed and struggling with budgets that have burgeoned with ever increasing spending on non-academic programs that do not inculcate academic knowledge to students.

The more diffused the responsibilities become that deviate from the academic mission of public education, the less effective public education becomes to fulfil that mission to educate students. Per a recent report by Texas landed at No. 40 on a new ranking of U.S. states based on their education levels and second to last when it comes to the share of the population over 25 with a high-school diploma.

Schools are already burdened by mental health screening requirements. They should not be further burdened by becoming responsible to create, staff, and fund another new department to navigate the complicated quagmire of Medicaid.

Nor is it the business of public education to further invade student and parental privacy by determining insurance coverage for them.

I respectfully ask that you vote "no" on HB98.

Thank you.

gayland Mahan  
self  
terrell, TX

I am completely opposed to bill HB98.

Randy King  
Self, retired software engineer  
Eules, TX

Honorable Members of the Texas House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety:

Currently, children in Texas Public Schools are being inundated with “well-being checks” and other mental health content in classroom lessons, followed by screenings and assessments. The data from these activities are being stored and analyzed to create Social-Emotional dashboards on students. This is NOT an appropriate activity for any publicly funded school district!

Sadly, HB98 would enable school districts to monetize these data collection efforts by becoming a Medicaid provider. Using Medicaid to create an additional revenue stream for districts is not necessary and creates a conflict of interest that cannot be overcome!

I also have real privacy concerns. According to the Texas School Safety Center, “Generally, HIPPA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records in most cases are not protected by HIPPA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).”

In reality, schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. This bill will authorize schools to become a Medicare provider to profit off the provision of mental health services in our schools. This is an inappropriate and unnecessary function of public schools! More and more, public schools have lost focus on their primary mission to educate students to a standard necessary to function as mature, productive adults in a free and civil American society. This is clearly evidenced in the ever deteriorating student scores in basic literacy and numeracy.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose the passage of HB98 out of your committee. Please do not allow government institutions to become so wealthy and powerful that us law-abiding citizens and their children become controlled wards of the state.

Respectfully,  
Randy M. King  
Eules, TX 76039

Mark Russell  
Self  
Houston, TX

I am writing to register my opposition to HB 98. I strongly oppose HB 98 because it would allow schools to be Medicaid providers. The role of schools is to provide education. Allowing schools to be Medicaid providers represents a conflict of interest and an overreach of responsibilities.

Schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. Schools should not be able to monetize the provision of mental health services in school. Enabling them to be Medicaid providers would do just that.

There is also a privacy concern with regards to health information. According to the Texas School Safety Center, “generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).”

In conclusion, I oppose HB 98.

Thank you.

Jena Russell  
Self  
Houston, TX

I strongly oppose HB 98 because it would allow schools to be Medicaid providers. The role of schools is to provide education. Allowing schools to be Medicaid providers represents a conflict of interest and an overreach of responsibilities.

Schools already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers. Schools should not be able to monetize the provision of mental health services in school. Enabling them to be Medicaid providers would do just that.

There is also a privacy concern with regards to health information. According to the Texas School Safety Center, “generally, HIPAA does not apply to student health information maintained by a school. While schools and school districts may maintain student health records, these records are in most cases not protected by HIPAA. Rather, student health information maintained at a school would be considered education records which are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).”

Thank you.

Cynthia McCaleb  
Self  
Kingsland, TX

Please DO NOT support this bill. It would give the government and schools even more power over our children, with strong possibilities for expansion of power.

Dale Dittmar  
self (retired)  
Fredericksburg, TX

I am opposed to HB 98. Even as American student test scores gauging academic achievement continue to decline, schools continue to devote less time to providing an education and more time trying to influence the personal aspects of student's lives. Providing mental health services through a private provider, potentially with Medicaid funds if this bill passes, will be a money-making endeavor for the provider as well as possibly the school. A mental health provider selected by the school may not have the values the parents want for their child. Parents should be notified of the potential problems their child may face and have a role in the selection of the mental health provider free from the influence of school administrators and the federal bureaucracy if Medicaid comes into play.

Cindi Castilla  
Texas Eagle Forum  
Dallas, TX

Texas Eagle Forum opposes HB 98. Our educational system was designed to educate children, and the government is continuing to overstep this duty. A government entity cannot replace a parent. Even with parental permission, we are training parents to rely on the government to raise their children. There is more and more evidence that medication is provided to young people who are diagnosed with a mental health condition, especially depression, or anxiety may create additional issues with taking the medicine. This almost appears as a program to employ mental health professionals, and create more diagnoses of mental issues, allowing pharmaceuticals to sell more of their product. We expect our schools to become excellent at creating grade level and above proficiency and understanding of reading writing math science in history before they endeavor to do anything else with children in Texas. Texas public schools should not endeavor to serve as parents. No government has ever been a good parent. Supporting families and helping families thrive is the key to a society that thrives. Please reject HP 98.

Belinda Hurst  
Self  
Boyd, TX

PLEASE vote against HB 98, as ALL mental health authority belongs to the parents.

Monica Hamilton

self

Boyd, TX

Schools are for teaching academics, not to be mental health providers. Leave mental health to the parents to be done off campus.

Sydney Carter

Network of Behavioral Health Providers

Houston, TX

NBHP supports HB 98.

EVE Margolis

self

Austin, TX

I support this bill. Many students that need mental health services are not able to get off campus to receive them and schools are not provided the resources needed to give them that care. This is a must.

Jeffrey Barch

self/Respiratory Care Practitioner

Paradise, TX

I oppose any effort to allow public schools to provide mental health services for students in their district. Receiving compensation for providing such services is an open invitation for schools to intrude in the personal lives of students and so of their family members. The public schools system has no business involving itself in anything other than the basic education of students.

Richard McKenzie, Mr.

Self - retired fixed income derivatives trader

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 98 for the following reasons: In order for public education to teach students to master academic skills and a factual understanding of the physical world, teachers and administrators should be rewarded for students' achievement of measurable academic goals.

Mental Health is now a political hot button. Disagreement exists between well-meaning medical professionals and between people over what constitutes "good mental health". As a result, the public schools should not be in the business of diagnosing mental health disorders nor of remedying them.

Public school teachers and administrators should not be empowered to characterize attitudes or behaviors of which they disapprove as mental health disorders.

If schools identify mental health disorders, they should alert students' parents to available professional resources. Schools should not invade the family's privacy nor attempt to overrule parents' medical choices regarding their minor children.

Public school administrators must not be distracted from their mission to educate students by the temptation of growing an alternative funding stream such as the Medicaid payments that HB98 would enable. The existence of such a potential revenue stream would invariably result in a dramatic expansion of the student population receiving "mental health services", whether needed or not.

Susan Burek

Self: I am a parent and an advocate for people with disabilities

Austin, TX

Thank you for allowing me to testify regarding HB 98. My name is Sue Burek and I live in Austin, Texas. I'm a parent, an advocate for people with disabilities, and a member of several advocacy organizations that serve families with children with disabilities, including Texas Parent to Parent, Protect Texas Fragile Kids, and Loving Hearts for All.

I am testifying IN SUPPORT OF HB 98, which adds school mental health care to the list of medical services that can be covered by SHARS.

Please vote to APPROVE HB 98. Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Cathy Stroud, Mrs.

Self retired public teacher

Gainesville, TX

I am totally against HB 98. There is no place in the public schools for a Medicaid mental health services. This is a family matter and not a school matter. I strongly urge you to vote NO on this bill if it comes up. As an educator and grandmother the schools job is to teach reading, writing, and math. The mental health world does not belong to the school. Respectfully, Cathy Stroud

Melissa Beckett

Texas Education 911

Longview, TX

HB 98 is a DANGER BILL; we strongly oppose HB 98 and request it be removed from consideration at the Youth Health and Safety hearing Monday afternoon. Dangers: HB98 would allow school districts to become Medicaid providers and deliver or contract with Local Mental Health Authorities for mental health services; this would result in schools making money off of the labeling, treating, and drugging of children. Schools are failing to educate Texas children. We need to return our schools to teaching the basics of reading, writing, math and science. Mental health concerns can and should be managed through local resources outside of the schools.

Sarah Wilpitz, Mrs.

self

Dallas, TX

I am against HB98 for many reasons such as this being a a conflict of interest between Medicaid and the schools. There are also privacy concerns related to this bill. Thank you!

Debi Litton  
self  
Sherman, TX

HB98/SB113

I think anyone with a sense of responsibility and intelligence can see this bill is lacking in many ways. In the first place, parents are fighting for their rights to protect and control more of their children's educational teachings and rights. It seems this bill is out of line in giving more power to the schools, when it is a time that we as parents want them to have less power and authority over our children. The schools have failed to do their first duty and that being to teach our students the basics. Lets get the schools back to doing that well before giving them anything else. They don't know how to police their libraries and their curriculum's for mental health issues! Besides, they already have the ability to partner with local mental health authorities and private providers--this is sufficient in itself. They don't need to become a healthcare provider themselves and get paid for it!!! Schools often don't agree with the way parents are raising their children, such as religious beliefs and transgender issues---they could use this to say my child is mentally, socially, and emotionally disturbed because he/she doesn't believe in transgender or because he/she believes in Jesus Christ! Another thing, How would this go on their school record? Who protects these records--HIPAA? They should never, never be a part of their educational record because it could backfire in many ways, such as college admissions and job opportunities. I say these two bills need to be dumped and rethought and rewritten by people wanting to protect the parents and the students. The last people to be considered in this issue are the schools, their districts and their school boards!!

Lisa Flores  
Self  
Austin, TX

I support this bill and urge the committee to move this bill along the process to become law.

Ana O'Quin  
Girls Empowerment Network  
Austin, TX

Youth Health & Safety Committee,

My name is Ana O'Quin, I am the Mental Health Policy Fellow at Girls Empowerment Network. We ignite the power in girls by teaching them the skills to thrive and believe in their ability to be unstoppable. Our programs serve more than 2,000 Texas girls in 3rd through 12th grade annually.???

Mental health affects how all people function and thrive. This is especially true and pertinent for our young people and children. We know that young girls are most vulnerable to mental health effects. Unfortunately, new 2021 national data from the CDC states that young girls are suffering most from mental health issues. 3 in 5 U.S. teen girls felt persistently sad or hopeless in 2021, 2x more than U.S. teen boys. 30% of U.S. teen girls have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023).

Students spend a majority of their waking hours at schools, which for many students are the only place they are receiving mental health care or support. School mental health strategies help school districts improve academic performance, reduce bullying, reduce disciplinary actions, and prevent student isolation. Allowing these critical services to be reimbursed by Medicaid will substantially increase both the quantity and quality of services that students will receive at school and relieve financial burden for school districts.

The CDC in their recent report on student mental health agree - "More than 95% of children and adolescents in the U.S. spend much of their daily lives in school, providing a considerable opportunity to foster the knowledge, skills and support needed to help prevent and reduce the negative impact of violence and other trauma and improve mental health." (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023)

The services provided by schools are complemented by those provided by community mental health authorities (LMHA), especially when a student's mental health needs are beyond a school's expertise or capabilities. LMHA's are the heartbeat of our community mental health care – they are responsible for providing families with mental health assessments, case management, psychosocial rehabilitations, skills training, counseling, and family support services. Without the core services that they provide, children are exponentially more likely to require intensive in expensive, and sometimes traumatic, settings such as residential treatment centers or psychiatric hospitals. HB 98 would streamline the continuum of care for students and deepen connections between schools and LMHAs.

In Texas, we rank 51 out of 51 states and territories for youth access to mental health care (Mental Health America, 2022). We must do better for our Texas youth. I urge you to support HB 98 to ensure all Texas kids can thrive. Thank you Chair Thompson and fellow committee members. I appreciate your consideration of this matter and thank you for your time!

Elizabeth Klein, Mrs  
Self  
Buchanan Dam, TX

Please please do NOT allow HB 98 to go through.

The government has no right to interfere with our children's mental health. Adolph Hitler did this brainwashing with young people in Germany!

Lord God please help our government discern this evil and protect our children.

Kevin Lebanik  
Self  
Fort Worth, TX

Giving schools the ability to track students "mental health" and then monetize it is crazy. Who thinks that ISD's aren't going to make sure every student has some sort of medical need that they as the Medicaid provider can then get paid to "fix". Our taxes go to them for educational instruction and with this bill as a medical provider. Talk about double dipping at the expense of the kids. How about we have ISD's focus on the basics of education and stay out of the medical field or the indoctrination field. Not to mention, HIPPA wouldn't apply to any of this so they can then sell the students information to 3rd parties. This bill and idea should never be even considered.

Margaret Heinkel-Wolfe  
self  
DENTON, TX  
FOR

Jamie Haynes  
Texans Wake Up  
Canyon, TX

I am against a school district contracting with a local mental health authority. Schools are for academics and should not be transformed into a medical hub. If the parents desire services, they can take the child on their own. Parents should be the only authority. I also have concerns that billing under Medicaid and receiving reimbursement funds is a conflict of interest and is ripe for abuse. In my opinion, this bill is government overreach. Please vote no on HB 98. Thank you for your dedication to our great state.