**REQUEST TO SUPPORT THE PA SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES ACT**

(HOUSE BILL 1665)

Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

My name is (INSERT NAME HERE) and I am a school counselor at (INSERT BUILDING HERE) in the (INSERT DISTRICT NAME HERE) school district. I am writing to ask for your support on House Bill 1665, the Pennsylvania School Counseling Services Act, which passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on March 25, 2024, and was introduced in the Pennsylvania Senate on April 4, 2024.

Pennsylvania is the **only state in America** that does not require school districts to outline comprehensive school counseling programs, or require school counselor staffing in schools. They must not only provide services to students and families in real time, but must simultaneously educate and advocate in their schools and communities about their roles and areas of expertise.

This means that not all school counselors are able to work effectively and efficiently with their students, and the types of services provided can look vastly different from one school district to another all across Pennsylvania.

* Despite increased student mental health needs, **there are less school counselors working in Pennsylvania this year than there were in 2010**.
* **Less than 20%** of Pennsylvania public school buildings meet the national benchmark for school counselor to student ratios.
* Almost half of all Pennsylvania school districts have school counselors **splitting their work assignment between multiple buildings** resulting in limited availability and services for students and families.

While school counselors have provided responsive services for students in crisis for many years, the need for proactive, preventative, and educational programming specific to mental health and social-emotional learning has been magnified by the disruptions brought to our schools by COVID-19.

The School Counseling Services Act will provide clarity for students and families as to the services they can expect to receive from their school counselors, to school districts who are seeking to support their students effectively through a global pandemic, and to taxpayers who can see their money fund efficient student support services that align with best practices, no matter their zip code or socioeconomic status.

Thank you for supporting our students, their families, and our communities by supporting House Bill 1665!

Sincerely,

(INSERT NAME and INFO HERE)