

House of Representatives Committee on Education

Proponent Testimony on HB 2690

Given by Mary Clare Halpin on February 20, 2020

Good afternoon, thank you for allowing me to speak in front of you today as a proponent for HB 2690. There are many things that I remember about my education in middle school and high school. I was blessed to learn from incredible teachers and worked hard to set a firm foundation to be able to build upon as I continued on to pursue a degree. However, in addition to remembering the valuable lessons I learned during my education, I also have clear memories of taking the Communities That Care Survey.

The reasons that I remember the survey so clearly are not hard to identify. Being taken out of class four times throughout my education to take a survey asking me about drugs, alcohol, violence, my family dynamic, and mental health is something hard to forget.

The first time that I took the survey I remember going through the questions and not ever knowing about most of the drugs it asked me about. At only twelve years old, it was not unreasonable for me to not know of these steroids, drugs, and intense gang violence that the survey mentions. The CTC was my first exposure to many of these issues.

Because of the CTC, my first exposure to these intense issues was not at home with my parents in a comfortable setting in which I could ask questions to people I trust. I was instead in a computer lab in the lower level of my middle school, sitting in silence, and without my parents knowing what topics had just been put into my young and curious mind.

As I was preparing for this testimony, I shared it with several of my friends. I was extremely shocked as each and every one of my friends that I talked to about my testimony remembered the survey and its questions as clearly as I did. It simply is something so graphic and intense and done frequently enough to stick in the minds of young adults for years.

With something that makes such an impact on young adults, I would ask that you would please consider that the importance of allowing parents to make decisions about what and how they want to expose their children to these intense topics and in turn support HB 2690.