



**S.115 - An Act relating to making miscellaneous changes in education laws
Vermont Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-VT)
House Education Committee
Laura O'Reilly, MSW candidate
Lynn Stanley, Interim Director, NASW-VT
April 1, 2021**

NASW-VT supports the passage of S.115. We are here today to testify on the provisions related to access to menstrual products and the School Wellness Policy.

Access to Menstrual Products (Section 11)

We support the language related to access to menstrual products as passed the Senate. This is an equity issue inked to financial resources. There are many girls/young women who miss school due to limited access to menstrual products. This poses a significant barrier to education. By requiring schools to provide the products in the restrooms, without requiring the students to ask for them, not only makes access easier, but also prevents any shame-inducing or stigma that may be experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming students.

School Wellness Program and Policy (Sections 9 and 10)

We support the robust nature of the School Wellness Program that exists in current law, as well as the development of a School Wellness Policy. We would like to offer an amendment to the composition of the Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health, which will be tasked with the development of the Wellness Policy.

As defined in S.115, the Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health is to be comprised of three members with expertise in health services, health education, or health policy. We would like to propose that at least one of those members be a school social worker. School social workers have a unique and insightful perspective on barriers to receiving an adequate education encountered by students. They also have firsthand experience with how the curriculum, including the Wellness Program) impacts students.

We suggest the following amendment (in bold) to S.115 –

Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 136 is amended to read:

§ 136. WELLNESS PROGRAM; ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WELLNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH

(b) The secretary ~~with the approval of the State Board~~ shall establish an Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health that shall include at least three members ~~associated with the Health services field~~ with expertise in health services, health education, or health policy, including at least one member who is a masters level school social worker....

Thank you very much for your consideration.