

Hello,

My name is Jillian Amodio, I am a mother of two and founder of Moms for Mental Health. I am writing in favor of the new bill that would allow for excused absences for mental health needs. One doesn't have to look far to recognize that mental health is of huge concern. If this past year has taught us anything, it is that our mental health and wellness is imperative to meeting our needs as social and emotional beings. While work ethic, determination, and perseverance are characteristics to be taught and valued, so too is it important to teach self care, compassion, and grace in the face of difficulty. We must be taught to not only recognize, but to honor our limitations.

Human beings are not machines, we are intricately and delicately designed wonders who deserve to be treated with the utmost care and respect. If we continue to push ourselves when our minds and bodies need a break, if we continue to ignore the warning signs that we are on the edge of burnout, and if we continue to put the expectations of others above our own needs, it is only a matter of time before our minds and bodies suffer the consequences.

Our physical health is no more important than our mental health. Both should be tended to. Just as we take off of work or school if we are suffering a physical illness, so too should we be encouraged to take a day as needed to tend to our mental health and emotional needs as well. It is through encouraging compassion towards oneself that we as a society move towards a place of greater acceptance, great respect, and greater love for all.

We are worth more than the time we spend in a classroom and a cubicle, and if we truly wish to see our youth rise to their full potential, we must do what we can to encourage them to take the time they need to be at their best. One does not move mountains exhausted and defeated, one moves mountains when they have been given the support and reprieve they need to recharge and face life's challenges revived and refreshed.