



NAMI | New Hampshire

February 17, 2026

Honorable Chair Ruth Ward
Senate Education Committee
Map Room, NH State Library
20 Park Street, Concord, NH

RE: NAMI NH Support for SB 658

Chair Ward and Committee Members:

On behalf of NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, I write in support of SB 658, authorizing the department of education to establish a safe and resilient schools advisory council.

One in six youth have a mental health condition. Early treatment is effective and can help young people stay in school and on track to achieving their life goals. Unfortunately, far too often, there are long delays before youth get the help they need, but schools can play an important role in helping youth and their families identify needs and connect with services in the community.

New Hampshire has a strong history of working to support the mental health of young granite staters. For several years, state agencies, policymakers, stakeholders, and community members have worked collaboratively to strengthen the state's system of care for youth and their families impacted by mental health conditions, suicide, and ongoing care crises including the emergency department (ED) boarding crisis. Within this effort, educators and school personnel are essential partners that can help us protect youth mental health inside and outside the school.

When we invest in children's mental and physical health, wellness, and safety within schools, we can improve the lives of children, youth, families, and our communities. The advisory council proposed in SB 658 is one key tool that can be used in support of this effort, and NAMI NH would be honored to sit on the council as included in the bill. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend Ought to Pass for SB 658.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Hawkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sam Hawkins

Find Help, Find Hope.

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