



**Testimony of Becky Straus, Legislative Director  
In Support of HB 2386  
House Education Committee  
February 13, 2013**

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

HB 2386 would prohibit school districts from using radio frequency devices to track the location of students. This common sense proposal is critical to protect the privacy of our students. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of its passage.

Examples of location tracking students in Texas<sup>1</sup> and California<sup>2</sup> provide an opportunity for lawmakers in Oregon to make a commitment to our students – they should never have to compromise their privacy rights in order to attend school. In these states, schools have implanted into student identification cards Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags or, in the case of a Richmond, CA preschool, into jerseys to be worn by the students. These tags are tiny computer chips that are more commonly used to track everything from cattle to commercial products moving through warehouses. Some districts want to use them to replace manual attendance records, track students' movements at school, or even collect data like whether the student has eaten or not.

While school officials and parents in these places may have been enticed by the utility of RFID tags as a “cost-saving measure,” we are concerned that the real price of insecure RFID technology is the privacy and safety of students.

These chips and the information they store are vulnerable to security breach that might result in the data being obtained and copied by unauthorized parties. Someone who wants to do harm to children could potentially sit in a car across the street and scan the students' location without teachers, school officials, parents, or children ever knowing that any information has been read. And if this information can be read, it can be copied easily to a duplicate chip. A child could be taken off campus while the duplicate chip continues to tell RFID readers that the child is safely at school.

Further, HB 2386 takes a stand against this type of privacy invasion, teaching Oregon's youth that schools are a safe place for learning and not a place where we much accept such an intrusive surveillance technology.

Thank you to the proponents for their leadership and foresight on this issue and thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please feel free to be in touch at any time with comments or questions.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2013/01/school-kicks-out-sophomore-in-rfid-student-id-flap/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.examiner.com/article/richmond-s-george-miller-iii-headstart-site-rolls-out-rfid-tracking-for-preschoolers>