



March 25, 2015

TO: Representative Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Committee on Education
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: HB 3425

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's federally-funded *Protection and Advocacy* office. Since 1977, DRO has provided legal-based advocacy services to students who are seeking or receiving special education services.

DRO supports passage of HB 3425.

DRO applauds the efforts of the legislature, DOE and school districts to address the heartbreaking experience of bullying in our schools. Students with disabilities are particularly susceptible to bullying which, like all forms of discrimination, sends a message that the victim is inferior and powerless.

DRO continues to receive reports from parents that some schools are not vigilant in following the mandates of ORS 339.356 and that acts of bullying still go uninvestigated and unresolved.

HB 3425 takes a positive approach to incentivizing better implementation of our anti-bullying law by requiring school districts to report confirmed acts of bullying and include demographic information that will allow the public to determine if students who are members of protected classes (for example, students with disabilities) are particularly susceptible to this victimization. Parents, students and communities cannot be assured that members of minority groups are being treated fairly without good information.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important safeguard for vulnerable Oregonians.