

February 11, 2019

Dear Representative Margaret Doherty,

My name is Rosaria Haugland and I'm writing to express my support for House Bill 2604, a bill that supports a school-based partnership for bullying prevention and youth empowerment.

The bill proposes designating \$6 million to Oregon middle and high schools to partner with community organizations to provide programs that would help students, their families, and educators learn how to prevent bullying among students.

I've seen the value of bullying prevention programming for youth firsthand. I'm a member of the Board of Directors of Ophelia's Place in Eugene. Ophelia's Place is a prevention-based organization dedicated to helping youth make healthy life choices through empowerment, education, and support. Among other services, Ophelia's Place provides presentations and trainings in middle and high schools that cover topics like Peers As Allies (bullying prevention), and Building Positive Relationships. Nearly 6,400 students were served in the 2017-2018 school year through our Full School Partnership Program, and the results have been positive.

At the end of following our program, for example, Springfield Public Schools reported that of those students who participated, 92% said they were more confident in developing, engaging and navigating healthy relationships with others, and 75% said they were confident in handling internet safety, including cyberbullying.

If more students, their families, and their educators had access to programs like this, I believe we'd see a decline in bullying in schools, and provide a safe space for students to instead focus on learning and on their future.

I encourage you to support and pass House Bill 2604 to help today's and tomorrow's kids.

Sincerely,


Rosaria P. Haugland

Ophelia's Place founder and Board of Directors member