

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Honorable Margaret Doherty  
900 Court St. NE, H-282,  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 2604 Relating to safe schools; declaring an emergency, in support of.

Dear Representative Margaret Doherty,

My name is Morgan Vauk, and I am a 22-year-old Chemistry Senior at the University of Oregon. I'm writing to you in support of Bill 2604 to allow funding for safer schools in Oregon.

I have been a part of Ophelia's Place in Eugene since 2008, taking advantage of the services and activities available to me as a youth and volunteering as an adult to give back. When I entered high school, I was subject to bullying by my peers for my intellect and my looks. I found myself dreading going to school, anxious when I was there, and depressed because I never felt accepted, just alienated. I would tell my mom and the administration of my school, but they could never get the bullying to completely stop.

My high school guidance counselor recommended me to be in one of Ophelia's Place's school groups meant for students to talk about the real stuff in their lives, and learn how to be a better person to myself and others. I no longer felt alone as I met other students in my school I didn't know before who were going through similar or other challenging circumstances. I could confide in the volunteers that led the school groups. I got to allow myself to be creative and nurturing, values I did not know I had until then. I learned new skills to help with my depression, anxiety, and communication with allies and bullies.

I had a challenging freshman year in high school what with bullying. I considered even dropping out at times just to avoid it all. However, with the interventions of Ophelia's Place in school, and in other aspects of my life, I am about to graduate college with a Bachelor of Science and have a dream job at ThermoFisher Scientific. I could not be the successful student and woman that I am today without their help and support in changing the social dynamics of my school, and empowering me to rise to my full potential.

My hope is that you vote in support of Bill 2604 and the funding that it needs, so more students can be successful.

Sincerely,



D. Morgan Vauk  
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