

## Parents4Preparedness Testimony

March 14, 2019 Salem, OR 3:00 PM

### ABOUT US:

- **Holly Cook:** CoChair of P4P; parent at Sunnyside Elementary in Southeast Portland.
- **Laura Hall:** CoChair of P4P; future parent at Chief Joseph Elementary in North Portland; team leader for the Portland Neighborhood Emergency Team program; earthquake preparedness instructor at Portland Community College; Program Specialist for the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization.
- **M. Shawn Jaquiss:** Member P4P; parent at Hosford Middle School in Southeast Portland; team member Portland Neighborhood Emergency Team – Woodstock neighborhood; member Multnomah County ARES, Bravo Team.

### WHY P4P IS HERE:

I am here today to testify on behalf of House Bill 2229 because we believe that school districts should provide instruction and drills to students and staff to prepare for a natural disaster. Further, we believe that providing this training to students and staff will encourage more families to begin making preparations in their own homes thus increasing the overall resilience of our communities.

We believe that:

1. Consistent messaging and practicing emergency drills builds “muscle

memory” in students and staff for how to behave in the event of natural disaster striking during school hours. This is evidenced by the smooth way students learn to evacuate buildings for fire drills.

2. A curriculum plan with consistent instruction for students of all ages about earthquake and tsunami preparedness will lead to more families taking steps to prepare at home. Children talk about what they have learned at school and can spur family conversations around family reunification plans, gathering of supplies, storing water, etc.

3. Additionally, if an earthquake should happen on a weekday while school is in session, many kids will need to shelter there, possibly for days, as their parents try to make their way to the schools to reunite with them. Our students and school staff need to be prepared for this possibility and consistent training and drills can help them to be ready.

## OUR IDEAS:

We believe there are a number of cost-effective ways the Oregon Legislature could have a profound and equitable impact on school and community preparedness.

1. If all schools were required to educate students and parents about the risk of the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and the importance of preparedness, we would begin to see more families preparing at home and thus greater community resilience when the earthquake does happen. Just as recycling reached mass acceptance when outreach focused on children, we could create a culture of preparedness by

focusing on K-12 education.

2. If all schools were required to do yearly reunification drills, parents would most certainly create better reunification plans for their families, thus reducing the need for sheltering students at schools.

3. If all schools were required to do some level of non-structural hazard mitigation, we could prevent hundreds or thousands of students and staff from being injured or trapped in classrooms during an earthquake.

It's worth noting that all of the ideas we've presented here today are relatively low-cost compared to the seismic upgrades already mandated by ORS 455.400.

#### CONTACT INFO:

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#### ABOUT PARENTS4PREPAREDNESS:

P4P is a network of parents who are working to make schools seismically safer. The group was formed in 2015 by several PPS parents with an interest in improving the seismic safety of our children's schools. Membership has grown to nearly 200 members representing more than 50 schools. Most of our members are connected to Portland-area schools, but our membership is

growing beyond PPS and the metropolitan area.

We do public outreach in schools and advocate for structural improvements to school buildings to address seismic risk. We also provide advice and support for parents who want to form seismic safety committees and coordinate projects such as non-structural hazard mitigation, emergency supply storage, and reunification drills. Our goal is to create a safer environment for children and encourage a culture of preparedness within schools.