

Date: 3.26.2019

Re: Support HB 2657

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Skylar Van Blarcom.

As someone who has been working with Oregon's youngest students, it is clear that youth are wanting more supports. In the Oregon Student Violence Report, 42% of students report believing there is not an atmosphere of trust and respect at school. Without a sense of trust and respect, students are left to fend for themselves.

Violence is a topic that all students are familiar with, but one that they are rarely allowed a platform to openly discuss in an academic setting. Violence prevention programs allow even the youngest of Oregon's students to engage in developmentally appropriate conversations about these difficult topics. Through these conversations, students take on a sense of ownership over their community, sharing their experiences and working together to navigate tricky situations.

I have personally seen the success of these programs first hand. Students are eager to combat a culture of violence in favor of social justice, safety, and a community that embraces diversity. Students as young as kindergartners are building skills in areas such as non-violent communication, enforcing personal boundaries, standing up for their peers, and seeking out help when issues extend beyond their means. By introducing these skills early on, we increase resiliency in students so they are able to navigate through any situation that may come their way.

In Oregon counties where a prevention and education program exists the following results have been reported:

- 59% of students reported an increased knowledge of healthy communication skills and awareness of how they communicate with others.
- 76% of students reported increased knowledge regarding signs of an unhealthy relationship.
- 54% of students were less likely to experience victimization by a dating partner.

Your support for HB 2657 is an investment in the safety of Oregon youth. By funding violence prevention programming you are directly helping to prevent sexual harassment, sexual assault, and dating and interpersonal violence for years to come.

Best,

Skylar Van Blarcom

PGP: (they/them/theirs)

Child Abuse Prevention Educator

Office Phone: (503) 557-5836

A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County
256 Warner Milne Rd., Oregon City, OR 97045

24-hr Crisis Line: 888-654-2288



DISCLAIMER

This message is intended for the sole use of the addressee, and may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the addressee you are hereby notified that you may not use, copy, disclose, or distribute to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received this message in error, please immediately advise the sender by reply email and delete this message.