

May 6, 2019

Testimony of Verna Wise Matthews, Executive Director of Ophelia's Place
House Bill 3032 & Senate Bill 180

Members of the Joint Community on Student Success,

My name is Verna Wise Matthews, and I'm the executive director of Ophelia's Place.

Ophelia's Place is a prevention-based nonprofit dedicated to helping youth make healthy life choices through empowerment, education, and support. It provides trauma-informed services that highlight the importance of inclusion and acceptance of all students. Addressing power imbalances that lead to bullying, and teaching real-world skills and critical thinking like effective communication and empathy-building is what Ophelia's Place does for parents, educators, and students.

Ophelia's Place supports House Bill 3032 because we understand that it takes both a preventative and responsive approach to decrease the number of bullying incidents in Oregon schools. Passing both House Bill 3032 and Senate Bill 180 would keep parents informed of bullying incidents when they happen, and provide information and training to them before a bullying incident even begins. It is important parents feel supported enough to support their kids should they experience bullying.

Intimidation doesn't end in the hallways. Bullying happens 24/7, and it's making an impact on the social and educational well-being of students. House Bill 3032 and Senate Bill 180 together would give parents, educators, and students the tools they need to stop bullying, and give students a safe, empowering place to become the greatest people they can be.

Please pass both House Bill 3032 and Senate Bill 180.

Thank you.

Verna Wise Matthews
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