



January 28, 2020

Dear Chair Doherty, Vice-Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Helt, and Members of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of Basic Rights Oregon, I respectfully request your support for HB 4132, which will provide much-needed assistance and resources for the Oregon Student Health Survey.

As the only statewide source of data on school climate and student health and wellbeing, the impact of the Oregon Students Health Survey is incredible. It helps state agencies, districts, and schools track data and develop policies and practices that are responsive to the needs of our students.

We at Basic Rights Oregon appreciate the vital, in-depth data that comes from the survey. When we first analyzed the results of the 2017 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, we were struck at the startling reality that the numbers presented. Nearly half of lesbian, gay or bisexual 8th graders have contemplated suicide, while close to a quarter of lesbian, gay or bisexual 8th graders have attempted suicide. Almost a third of transgender 8th graders have attempted suicide.

Each of these statistics represents a kid in need, which is why we knew we had to do something. It led us to create and help pass Adi's Act. Named for Adi Staub, a young transgender girl who died by suicide in 2017, Adi's Act now is responsible for implementing model suicide prevention and postvention policies in all Oregon school districts.

Without the in-depth information provided by the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, we may not have known how deeply our LGBTQ youth were suffering. Due to the fact that the Oregon Student Health Survey does not currently have dedicated funding or staff capacity, it's difficult to help schools and districts effectively use their data to drive decisions. The information is there for the educators and school administrators, but without technical assistance to understand the data, it's difficult to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

We are writing to respectfully ask you to codify and fund the Oregon Students Health Survey through HB 4132 so that they may have the critical resources needed to ensure schools and communities have the data they need now and in the future.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Haque

Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon