

I am writing in support of HB4145. In the Central Oregon region, threats to our schools happen on an all too frequent basis. Youth have become familiar with hearing vague and/or direct threats of harm to our schools. These threats impact our students, school staff, and families, which in turn creates strain on the learning environment and the psychological safety of our communities. Currently, a student can make a threat over social media or through other means, causing fear in the community, which creates a very costly ripple effect including; reduced attendance at school by students and staff, law enforcement investigations, economic effects for parents and employers, and ongoing alarm.

Many times, youth are not held accountable criminally for their actions because there are no laws to hold them accountable. Often times, youth who make a threats of violence are allowed to return to school before the school and threat assessment teams have adequate time to put safety and management plans in place. These threats have ongoing ramifications such as mental health services, skills training, and education.

Each time a youth makes a threat of violence they are waving a red flag saying "I have a problem that I cannot fix." They do not know the pathway to solve their problem. Threat Assessment Teams work hard to wrap around services for these students, but we can frequently come across barriers to these interventions.

It is important for law enforcement and our district attorney to have more tools with real consequences to ensure our youth receive the help and support they need.