

Chair Bynum and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 2546. My name is Dionne Miller and I am the mother of Tyler Miller who has offered his testimony to you today.

Tyler has already shared his emotions, and how the event AND the mishandling by the Salem / Keizer School district changed the trajectory of his high school y and his opportunity to pursue his passion of basketball at the next level.

What I would like to offer is how our trust in the school system backfired and how lack of answers, direction, transparency, failure to communicate impacted, and continues to impact my son and our family.

It was four months between when the Salem Keizer School district sent police to my doorstep to begin questioning my son on the incident that occurred and when we received a vague email from the superintendent, which read in full as follows:

- Mr. and Mrs. Miller, and Tyler Miller: I want to inform you that the District completed its internal investigation of the incident in December 2015 in San Diego that Tyler described to the investigator. While I cannot share the details about the investigation itself or specific findings, I can tell you that the investigator confirmed Tyler's credible account of the incident. We are not able to comment on any confidential matter involving other students. On behalf of the District, I want to personally thank you for your patience and cooperation over these last three months.

We had many questions. Was Tyler's report verified, why were kids that did this to him allowed to continue playing, win awards and not miss a beat while this investigation went on. Were my kids safe at their new school and at events – what was the Salem Keizer School district doing to ensure their safety in future games against these kids. Will my kids ever be able to go to a school event and not be harassed by these kids. We asked, repeatedly, but received no answers and no replies.

4 years later, we are still looking for answers, seeking closure and hoping procedural changes have been made to ensure no other child and family would have to endure what we have endured. The Department of Education continues to sift through what they state is the largest appeal file they have ever worked on.

The school district did a nice job of wooing us in with trust then stonewalling us from any information to give us hope or piece of mind that procedures would be followed, much less changed, and our kids would be safe.

A cause of action for injunctive relief would have at least empowered us to have a path to get answers early on. My son and my family could have felt safety, urgency to implement proper procedure and most importantly, closure. It is so important for victims and their families to get answers and closure – something we still long to have. Thank you for your careful consideration and we ask that you support HB 2546.