

Dear Chair Williams and members of the committee

I am writing in support of HB 4013, specifically the first provision to establish a pilot program to assist school districts in preventing student homelessness.

I practiced as a psychologist in Oregon schools for decades and now serve on boards where I see the immense impact of homelessness on children. Just as we talk about the Social Determinants of Health, we need to talk more about the Social Determinants of Educational Success. I will give a hypothetical example, that reflects the reality in many schools today.

Bobby struggled in school but had an IEP prepared and implemented and is doing much better, coming to school, enthusiastic and improving in many areas. He also has two siblings in similar circumstances. But they came to school yesterday and said that their family was moving because they were going to be evicted. Their mother had missed two weeks of work because of illness, they had failed to pay their rent and were going to have to move. They would probably move in with an aunt who lived in Washington.

If personnel were available to do it, the school could work with the mother, find rent relief, and maybe keep Bobby in school. But this would take unavailable time and would mean Bobby's mother would have to work with other organizations and probably fall through the cracks. Having a fund readily available to help the family over this crisis would make all the difference in the world in Bobby's future. We can do this.

I hope that the pilot project is well implemented and gives guidance to how we can make this available state wide. Our schools are the first and most compassionate point of contact for our children and families. They are having to do tasks that go far beyond traditional education. We need to give them resources to do this well.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.  
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