

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Testimony in Support of SB 1539

February 16, 2022

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Senators Armitage, Findley, and Sollman,

For the record, my name is John Iglesias. I am a commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs. I am also involved with [The 15th Night](#), a youth-informed, community-wide safeguard for Eugene-Springfield students who are navigating school, life, and homelessness alone by creating access to a coordinated network of existing community resources. On behalf of OCAPIA, I am writing in support of SB 1539, which would establish a pilot program to provide funding to school districts for purposes of increasing access to schools by homeless students and improving their academic achievement.

1. OCAPIA's role is to work toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon's Asian and Pacific Islander population. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development, and partnerships.
2. In our statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, OCAPIA strongly supports SB 1539.

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Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

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In Oregon, thousands of youth experience homelessness each year¹. Approximately 50% of students who are unaccompanied and experiencing homelessness will not graduate high school. School systems are a critical resource for youth experiencing homelessness. These systems are a hub for keeping students engaged in education and connected to adults who can connect them to housing programs and other services. Funding programs to keep youth in school has significant economic and social returns, as research shows that for every \$1 spent on youth interventions addressing homelessness, the community saves \$4.12.²

It is imperative for Oregon policymakers to invest in programs that prevent youth homelessness, and intervene in person-centered and evidence-based ways when young people experience housing insecurity. OCAPIA urges the committee to pass SB 1539 and invest in programs that keep homeless youth connected and supported by educational institutions and provide students with hope for their future.

Sincerely,

John Iglesias



Commissioner, the Oregon Commission on
Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

¹ Smock, Kristina. [Oregon’s Runaway and Homeless Youth: An Overview and Strategic Framework](#). Oregon Department of Human Services Homeless Youth Advisory Committee. August 2016.

² New Avenues for Youth Study (Portland, Oregon 2010)

