

2/21/23

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in strong support of the Toxic Free Schools, Senate Bill 426. As a professor of teacher education at the University of Oregon, a former public-school teacher, and a parent of an elementary student in an Oregon public school, I have many reasons to strongly support this bill.

As a former high school environmental science teacher, my students and I explored toxicology issues, studying and thinking about the ways in which toxins impact human bodies and ecosystems. In our studies, we explored how toxicologists have found that babies and youth are the greatest at risk from exposure because of their small and developing bodies. My students were angered when they realized that they were being exposed to harmful chemicals in their lives, without being warned of their danger or able to avoid them. We need transparent practices and accurate records concerning pest management in and around schools, as supported by SB 426 so that all stakeholders--students, faculty, staff--can understand their exposure and risk.

As a teacher educator, I care about the health and safety of teachers (my former students) who may spend 30+ years of their lives on school campuses. Given the ways teachers' lives and bodies are already on the frontlines in our society, we owe it to them to ensure that their workplaces are not fostering conditions for long-term impacts like cancer. We need to include educators in decision making about pest management on school campuses. By requiring diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process, SB 426 ensures an important step omitted in previous legislation.

As a parent of an elementary student in an Oregon public school, I fervently hope that my child's health and safety are paramount in decisions being made in and around the school campus. I am particularly concerned about schools serving marginalized communities who may have less access to alternatives to traditional pesticides. We owe it to our all children to keep them as safe as possible by reducing (and omitting) their exposures to toxins at their schools.

Please protect the health and safety of our teachers and children in schools. There are so many dangers to them. Let's not have pesticides be one of them.

Sincerely,

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