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To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Lori Sattenspiel, Director of Legislative Services
Re: Senate Bill 1576-3
Date: February 12, 2024

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Oregon School Boards Association and our membership, including 197 school districts and 19 Education Service Districts, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the -3 amendments to Senate Bill 1576. OSBA supports SB 1576 -3.

Nearly everyone has recreated on school grounds at some point. In many communities, particularly rural communities, school grounds may be one of the only safe green spaces to play. Across Oregon’s 197 districts, people use our grounds daily to run, walk their dog, play sports, or take in fresh air.

Our schools do not want to stand in the way of Oregonians using our public lands for recreational purposes, but we can only do so with recreational immunity protections. If districts do not have these immunity protections from potential liability, some may be forced to erect fences or other means to mitigate the risks posed to school districts if someone gets injured as they recreate.

The passage of SB. 1576 with the -3 amendment would provide important safeguards so we can continue to allow public access and recreational opportunities to our school grounds throughout the year. So, students, families, and community members can continue to use school green spaces for recreation.