



Representative Hoa Nguyen  
Oregon House District 48

SB 456 - GRANTS TO ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

**3/10 Senate Education Committee**

I am State Representative Hoa Nguyen, and I represent House District 48, which includes outer Southeast Portland and North Clackamas County.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 456, a crucial step in addressing chronic absenteeism in Oregon schools. As an educator and a school board member, we have witnessed firsthand the detrimental effects of chronic absenteeism on student success, equity, and community well-being.

From an Educator's perspective, Chronic absenteeism is one of the most pressing challenges facing our schools today. When students miss 10% or more of the school year, they fall behind academically, struggle to form meaningful relationships, and are less likely to graduate on time. In my classrooms, I have seen students disengage due to circumstances beyond their control—transportation barriers, lack of access to healthcare, or unstable housing situations. Many of these students want to be in school but face systemic obstacles that make attendance difficult. SB 456 provides targeted funding to community-based organizations and education service districts, ensuring that students receive the necessary support to attend and thrive in school.

As a school board member, I have reviewed attendance data that highlights alarming disparities among student populations. Students from historically underserved communities, including those experiencing homelessness, students with disabilities, and students from low-income households, are disproportionately impacted by chronic absenteeism. Addressing this crisis requires strategic, well-funded interventions that reach beyond the classroom. SB 456 will allow schools to partner with local organizations to implement mentorship programs, family engagement initiatives, and wraparound services tailored to the unique needs of our students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated absenteeism rates, and despite our best efforts, we continue to see record-high numbers of students missing school. This bill declares an emergency, recognizing that we cannot afford to wait any longer. By investing \$6 million into grants aimed at reducing chronic absenteeism, SB 456 takes a proactive approach to ensuring that every child in Oregon has an equitable opportunity to succeed.

We urge you to pass SB 456 and make a meaningful investment in Oregon's future. Our students, families, and educators need your support to remove the barriers that keep children out of the classroom. Thank you for your time and consideration.