

Submitter:

Maria Aguilar

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4079

TO: House Committee on Education

SUBJECT: Support HB 4079 to Safeguard Students and Families

Chair Hudson and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Maria, and I live in Forest Grove. I am an educator, and I am writing in strong support of HB 4079, legislation that is urgently needed to protect students, families, and school communities.

The rescission of federal guidance designating schools as “sensitive areas” in 2025 has created deep uncertainty regarding on-campus ICE activity. Since then, federal enforcement actions have increased in areas surrounding schools, and in recent months, schools have been forced into lockdown procedures—sometimes multiple schools in a single day. These actions ripple far beyond the moment itself, leaving lasting fear in the hearts of children.

As an educator, I see the impact of this fear every day. I see it in the way my students speak—careful, questioning, and unsure of themselves. I see it in how they carry their bodies, as if they are walking on eggshells or trying not to be noticed. I see it in their tired eyes. Children should not be burdened with this level of fear. When students are preoccupied with safety and uncertainty, it becomes harder for them to learn, to participate, and to simply be children.

School should never be a place where students are afraid to show up. It should be a place of safety, stability, and belonging—where every child, regardless of where they come from or the status of their family, feels protected and welcome. When that sense of safety is broken, it harms not only individual students but the health of the entire school community.

HB 4079 provides clear, consistent expectations for proactive and reactive communication to ensure that students, families, and staff are informed and safe during moments of uncertainty. These protections matter. Consistency and transparency help restore trust and allow schools to remain places of learning rather than fear. Oregonians know that when we are informed, we are stronger together.

HB 4079 is part of the 2026 Immigrant Justice Package and is supported by a broad coalition of immigrant justice advocates, civil liberties groups, unions, and community-based organizations. I respectfully urge you to support this community-led legislation and stand up for the safety, dignity, and well-being of all Oregon students.

Sincerely,

Maria

Forest Grove