

Submitter: Megan French
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 all the members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Megan French and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am the Education Director at a non-profit that supports immigrant and refugee families in Oregon, and I am writing in strong support of HB 4079 to Safeguard Students and Families.

Federal guidance designating schools as “sensitive areas” was rescinded in 2025 created uncertainty regarding on-campus ICE actions. Federal enforcement actions have increased in the areas around schools. In recent months schools have been forced to go into lockdown procedures, sometimes several schools in a single day, and I have seen firsthand some of these incidences through my work. As part of our youth programming, we partner with schools in Portland to offer push-in tutoring and afterschool enrichment activities, and we prioritize the schools' immigrant, refugee and multilingual students. Since the start of this 2025/2026 school year, we have seen a significant increase in parents expressing fear and concern about sending their kids to our partner schools. In recent months, we have had to cancel important parent engagement events, such as a family preparedness plan and mental health workshop, due to safety concerns with ICE. We also experienced a partial lockdown during an afterschool program, which was due to an ICE sighting in the neighborhood surrounding the school. These traumatic experiences have led to an overall stressful, anxiety-inducing school environment for students and parents.

Schools are hubs of learning, engagement and safety, and they must remain that way. Any time there is an incident involving law enforcement or unknown persons with access to weapons in or around school locations there must be clear process and communication.

This bill lays out proactive and reactive communication expectations to keep everyone safe. Consistent application and consistent communication is needed so that all students, parents and staff, regardless of which school they attend, are able to be safe and informed when something happens in their community. Oregonians know that when we are informed we can be stronger together.

Sincerely,

Megan French
Portland