

Chair Hudson and all the members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing on behalf of AFT-Oregon. We are a labor federation representing workplace unions across the state in early learning, K-12 schools, and across our state's college and university landscape. Our 28 unions represent over 18,000 essential staff, instructors, faculty, and employees who support our students and advocate for the public good. **AFT-Oregon's leadership unanimously and enthusiastically endorses HB 4079 and recommends the legislature pass the bill.**

Schools, colleges, and universities are supposed to be welcoming environments which support student learning. Our members work tirelessly to provide the best education possible. Federal guidance designating schools as "sensitive areas" existed for this reason – until it was rescinded in 2025 and has led to uncertainty regarding on-campus ICE actions.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. In early 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detained several Columbia University student activists, notably Mahmoud Khalil and Mohsen Mahdawi, for their roles in pro-Palestinian protests. Teachers and students at K12 schools across our state and the nation have been terrorized by ICE. These incidents are not abstract – they are here and present.

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.

Public university administrators may fear retribution from the Trump administration and a withholding of NSF, DOE, DOD, and other grant funds. The thousands of public university faculty, professionals, and graduate employees we represent believe we *must* be on the right side of history and be able to do this simple action – sending an alert. These systems already exist campus by campus for fires and suspicious persons or laboratory incidents.

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, can be safe and informed when something happens in their community. Oregonians know when we are informed, we can be stronger together.

HB 4079 is part of the 2026 Immigrant Justice Package and is backed by a broad coalition of immigrant justice advocates, civil liberties groups, unions like our own, and community-based organizations. I urge you to support all these community-led policies to protect the freedoms of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Harper Haverkamp, PhD
American Federation of Teachers – Oregon (AFT-Oregon)