

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 Marlene Lopez Patton, and I live in Gresham. I am a Senior Program Manager with Latino Network in the Educational Access Program Department and identify as Mexican-American. 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Federal guidance designating schools as “sensitive areas” was rescinded in 2025, creating uncertainty regarding on-campus ICE actions. Federal enforcement actions have increased in the areas around schools. In recent months, schools have been forced to implement lockdown procedures, sometimes in multiple schools in a single day.

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 a straightforward process and communication.

Our Latino community is living in fear; regardless of status, they are worried about leaving their homes. At the school sites, I have seen parents asking their children to pick up siblings from school and groceries to avoid leaving their home. We have heard of people being detained and are not sure how to contact them until they have already been deported to their home country. The constant fear that a family member will be detained is truly heartbreakingly and has left us feeling discouraged and helpless. Our community is really hurting and wants to see accountability by schools and ensure a safe and welcoming environment for students. Parents rely on education systems to protect their youth and trust that schools have protocols in place to prevent people who aren’t allowed on campus from entering the building.

Being around youth, many rumors are spread that can lead to misinformation. If school leaders shared accurate information promptly, there wouldn't be so much chaos or worry happening among our students.

This bill lays out proactive and reactive communication expectations to keep everyone safe. Consistent application and communication are needed so that all students, parents, and staff, regardless of which school they attend, can stay safe and informed when something happens in their community. Oregonians know that 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, and community-based organizations. I urge you to support these community-led policies to protect the freedoms of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

*Marlene Lopez Patton*

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# Thank you for supporting the Immigrant Justice Package!

