

Testimony of Gina Gutierrez

Community Partner/ Latino Network
In Support of HB 4079
House Committee on Education
Written Testimony – February 3, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gina Gutierrez and I am a Youth Engagement Specialist for the Early Escalera; Education Access Program for Latino Network. I reside in Portland, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of House Bill 4079.

Currently, ICE raids have been happening all over the country, including Oregon, and I have seen firsthand the anxiety it is causing in the Latino Community. Students that I work with are sharing or asking how the school can do better at keeping them safe in school. As a daughter of immigrant parents, I have a special connection with this because I would want to feel safe and protected by those that care about my rights in this country when I attend school. Maintaining a stream line of communication can help us better protect students, families, teachers, community members, and anyone that works in a school setting. Here are a few important reasons:

Safety and Trust in Schools: Schools should be a place where students, staff, and families feel safe and supported. Without clear policies, it puts everyone at risk because the presence of Immigration Agents is already causing trauma to their emotional and psychological state. Having pre-established plans in place can help to mitigate the anxiety that students are already feeling.

Equity and Access to Education: Currently, students are having a hard time focusing in school because they are constantly worried about if their parents will still be home by the time they return from school. Students are trying to strive for success but without the investment of the school in their safety this only causes more students to have limits in accessing their education. HB 4079 helps ensure that all students can access public education without fear that their school is not prepared to protect their rights.

Consistency Across Districts: Not all students, faculty, and families are aware of their rights that are protected by the U.S. Constitution such as the right to remain silent. Part of having a set protocol should be ensuring that all parties have a foundational understanding of what ICE can and cannot do. This can help inform action plans such as moving students from public areas like school parking lots to private ones.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote yes on HB 4079 and support its passage. Thank you for your time and the opportunity for me to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Gina Gutierrez