

February 5, 2026

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Re: Support for SB 1581: School Meals for All

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Natalie Gordon and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCAO) to urge you to pass SB1581.

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon's (PCAO) role is to advance statewide efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families, supporting early childhood systems, and ensuring children have access to the services and protections they need to grow up safe and healthy. We work in partnership with community-based organizations, health care providers, advocates, and state agencies across Oregon to promote prevention-focused, trauma-informed approaches that prioritize child wellbeing. We work closely with our statewide and national partners to elevate research, data, and best practices, and to advocate for policies that center child wellbeing so that all children can thrive.

SB 1581 ensures that every student can access breakfast and lunch at school at no cost, regardless of income. This is a critical step to addressing hunger during an affordability crisis and ensuring that students can focus on learning rather than worrying about food.

I am especially encouraged that SB 1581 makes breakfast accessible after the start of the school day, recognizing that many students arrive late due to transportation barriers or family work schedules. Allowing breakfast to be served in the classroom and counted as instructional time ensures students are nourished without losing valuable learning time.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, SMFA advocates met with Representative Chotzen and he shared that he had just shoveled a cup of noodle right before opening his office door to meet with us. He acknowledged that even he felt rushed to eat and that it was not the best meal nutritionally. Rep Chotzen shared that he related to this bill's importance because nutritional food was supportive of decision making for policy makers like himself, sharing examples of studies such as "the hungry judge" which rulings of parole hearings were more favorable after a meal break. Whether it be a legislator or a judge or a student in our Oregon schools, bodies need nutrition to learn, support effective decision making, and stabilize cognitive functioning.

SB 1581 also reduces administrative burdens for schools by eliminating meal applications, income verification, and unpaid meal debt collection. Just as importantly, it protects students from stigma and

meal shaming, helping create school environments rooted in dignity, equity, and inclusion.

Research and lived experience consistently show that when students have reliable access to nutritious food, schools see improved attendance, fewer disciplinary incidents, and stronger academic outcomes. SB 1581 is a smart investment in Oregon's students and our future.

With only a small number of schools remaining before Oregon becomes a Hunger-Free Schools state, I urge you to vote YES on SB 1581 and ensure that no child in Oregon goes hungry at school.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalie Gordon".

Natalie Gordon

Collaborations Coordinator

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Portland, OR

natalie@preventchildabuseoregon.org

February 4, 2026

To: House Committee on Judiciary

From: Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Re: Support for HB 4088

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Natalie Gordon and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCAO) to urge you to pass HB 4088.

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon's (PCAO) role is to advance statewide efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families, supporting early childhood systems, and ensuring children have access to the services and protections they need to grow up safe and healthy. Gender affirming health care and advocating for youth bodily autonomy is essential to protecting all children's rights to decisions about their bodies. Everyone deserves to make decisions about their bodies and the medical care they receive. In light of proposed federal and out-of-state efforts to restrict evidence based, gender affirming care and reproductive health services, passing HB4088 as a state-level protection is especially critical. HB 4088 would protect the ability to make informed decisions about their own bodies, health, and future.

PCAO works in partnership with community-based organizations, health care providers, advocates, and state agencies across Oregon to promote prevention-focused, trauma-informed approaches that prioritize child wellbeing. We work closely with our partners to elevate research, data, and best practices, and to advocate for policies that center child wellbeing so that all children can thrive. Gender affirming health care and youth bodily autonomy is trauma informed and focuses on the individual's well being by advocating for their rights to make decisions about their own body and health. Studies show that transgender and queer youth who cannot secure access to medically necessary and effective care have significantly higher risk of mental health issues, suicidal ideation and long term impacts to quality of life.

We urge the committee to prioritize youth perspective in the deliberation of HB4088, especially marginalized youth, transgender youth and gender non conforming youth. From PCAO's engagement in the My Future My Choice (MFMC) program operated by Oregon Department of Human Services, we have heard perspectives of Oregon youth about the sexual health education they want to see in their Oregon schools and create these avenues for learning about sexual health education. an Oregonian transgender youth that is creating educational materials that elevate the experience of transgender

youth in sexual health education that he felt was not available to him. It has been incredible to observe him advocate for transgender youth autonomy and strategies that promote gender affirming sexual health education, but what brought him to lead civic engagement in his high school was not because

HB 4088 safeguards all youth and individuals who seek medical affirming care and reproductive health services.

PCAO is a member of the Oregon Youth Sexual Health Partnership

This bill safeguards all youth regardless of their gender identity or

Transgender and non-binary youth deserve a life of well being, joy and opportunities to thrive. We urge your support in HB 4088.

In partnership,

[Name]

[Title]

[Prevent Child Abuse Oregon](#)

Portland, OR

[Email]