Submitter:	Bethany Ramse
On Behalf Of:	
Committee:	Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	HB4079

Bethany Ramse
Regarding House Bill 4079, the Safeguarding Students and Families Act
February 23, 2025

My name is Bethany Ramse; I am a concerned resident in the Newberg Dundee community. I am an 8 year resident of the community and parent of a child in public education. Professionally I am a minister to children and families in a local faith community, with previous experience in higher education. I am writing in strong support of HB 4079. The requiring of Oregon school districts, public universities and community colleges to have a policy for addressing the entrance of federal immigration authority on to a public education campus is necessary to protect the safety of learning environments, the emotional well-being of students and educators, and the vital trust between school administrators and the student community - particularly when the student community is made up of minors.

Last year a fellow parent from my child's school called me to share that while dropping off something for their student, someone from their household had seen federal immigration authorities in the school parking lot. From my involvement in and connections to the school's parent volunteer group, I reached out to a fellow volunteer who has familiarity with the process of verifying someone's report of seeing federal immigration officers in the community. The volunteer let me know that their presence had been verified and the school was now aware. A couple hours later I showed up for my weekly volunteer shift at the school, and authorities were no longer present; but I became aware firsthand of what could happen when an educational community has to determine their own communication policies for these circumstances, or chooses not to.

Without the state requirement of clear and consistent policies, especially addressing disclosure to the student body (and their parents/guardians as applicable) of federal immigration authorities on school property, we leave vulnerabilities open to unnecessary chaos, rumors and inaccurate information, undue anxiety in the educational environment, and disjointed communication between educators and school staff. All of those potentials - chaos on school property, rumors and false information, heightened anxiety, and disconnected communication between educational professionals on site - most definitely have the ability to escalate tension and weaken trust between educators and the student body. Schools have policies for response and precise communication to the student body (and their parents as applicable) for scenarios such as fire danger and power outages (when school

phones go down). Administrators and educators know how to respond, students and parents know how they will be informed to a change in the school environment, and protocol protects schools from poor reactionary responses. Certainly, the abrupt entrance of armed federal immigration authorities carries just as much potential for disruption.

I am compelled to testify because I believe that proactively requiring state schools, of all types, to have a plan in place will significantly decrease the risk of escalating events that have the potential to create and stoke fear and division, and lead to traumatic moments of caught-off-guard students (and educators) witnessing dramatic detainments, and the brandishing of firearms on school property. I am testifying for the empowering of our teachers, administrators and school staff in our community. I am testifying for the parents who do not have the privilege, means, or opportunity that I have, to find out about federal authorities entering their children's school via social connections and volunteer roles on site. I am testifying for the soul care of children, families, and students. As a spiritual care minister, I am testifying to protect the emotional health of our community by decreasing risk of traumatic events.

I am deeply grateful for your consideration of support for this bill, and the work already completed.