



Clackamas County Sheriff's Office

March 29, 2019

Re: Support of HB 2657

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

As Chair of the Oregon Task Force on School Safety and the Clackamas County Sheriff, I know firsthand that too many of Oregon's students are in crisis. In our School Safety Task Force Report to the Legislature this year, you will find the following troubling data on the wellbeing of our students:

- 107 youth ages 10 to 24 years died by suicide in Oregon in 2017, making suicide the second leading cause of death among youth in that age bracket. (*Oregon Violent Death Reporting System, 2018*)
- One half of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth said they considered suicide during 2017, and one fourth said they attempted suicide. (*2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey*)
- In 2017, more than 9% of our 8th graders reported not going to school at least one day in the previous 30 days due to safety concerns. (*2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey*)
- Nearly one in three 8th graders – and over one in five 11th graders – reported having been bullied at school in 2017. (*2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey*)
- More than 30% of Oregon 8th graders in 2017 reported feeling “so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks in a row” that they “stopped doing some usual activities.” (*2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey*)

To this list we can add the knowledge that Oregon has one of the highest rates of domestic and sexual violence in the nation. Understandably, youth who experience domestic and sexual violence have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and other health consequences such as anxiety and depression, difficulty concentrating in school and a loss of hope.

We can turn this around. Violence is preventable.

In Clackamas County, violence prevention educators through Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), work directly with middle and high school students to provide a 10-session curriculum during health classes. They address bystander intervention, dating/sexual violence, oppression, gender socialization, media literacy and victim empathy. This curriculum is provided through a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive way that addresses the root causes of violence. Its programming like this that gives our students the tools they need to understand how to respond to violence and feel hope.

Without a dedicated source of funding violence prevention programs, like the one provided by CWS, will not have resources to impact and stop this violence before it ever occurs. I am not telling you anything new – our schools need help to turn around the mental health crisis our students are facing. HB 2657 will help our students by creating a funding stream dedicated to violence prevention education. Oregon schools need to be safe havens where all students can learn and thrive without facing physical harm or being subjected to acts of harassment and intimidation.

Your support for HB 2657 will help fund comprehensive violence prevention in schools. It's the right investment as we work together to ensure our students are well and our schools are safe.

Thank you,



Craig Roberts
Clackamas County Sheriff
Chair, Oregon Task Force on School Safety