

Hi Courtney –

I am writing to you in support of House Bill 4145, as I deeply believe that there should be mental health evaluation, treatment, and monitoring for anyone convicted of a misdemeanor from threatening a school or place of worship.

As a parent of a 7th grade student at Stoller Middle School, I have experienced the deep impact that a threat can have on students and our community. In December, 2018, Stoller went into a Lockdown based on the belief that there was someone with a gun inside the school. It was a terrifying experience for my son (at the time, an 11 year old 6th grader), who was told to remain under his desk with the lights out for more than two hours while listening to his fellow classmates go to the bathroom in a bucket in the corner of a classroom as needed. Law enforcement frisked kids one by one, releasing them to the gymnasium class by class, while parents waited outside on a dark and rainy afternoon, praying for the safe return of their kids. There were even a number of kids released into a wooded area outside the school to take cover and wait. It was a terrifying experience for all involved – teachers, students, parents. My son went back to school the next day, to talk through his feelings with teachers and students. However, there were many kids terrified to go back to school over those next few days. For the daughter of one of my dear friends, this experience triggered a downward spiral of severe anxiety that has only worsened over the last year to the point of this child withdrawing from Stoller and being home schooled for the remainder of her 8th grade year.

While law enforcement has never disclosed details about the perpetrator for this incident, I strongly believe that if the person who threatened our children had been caught, he/she should have received mental health support and treatment in order to prevent future threats or violence against our children and community. In addition, there are many children who experienced the fear of a threat and also need access to mental health care to deal with their feelings of fear and anxiety. If mental health evaluation and treatment is not provided to these people, the violence often continues with another threat or harm against people in our community. In today's world of gun violence and ongoing threats, it is our responsibility to provide necessary treatment to those who need it in order to stop the cycle of violence and build a stronger community of support.

Thank you for listening and taking action in support of House Bill 4145. It is critical that the state of Oregon respond to mental health issues for the sake of school safety and the overall wellbeing of our community. Please let me know if I can provide additional assistance at any time.

Warm regards,
Kimberley Martindell
503-804-2711