

February 10, 2020

hjud.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: House Bill 4145 (2020) (Threats to Schools and Places of Worship)

Dear Chair Sanchez and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to voice my support for House Bill 4145 (2020). This bill is sponsored by Representative Courtney Neron and drafted in partnership with Safe Neighborhoods for Oregon, a non-profit that supports common sense solutions to ensure safe communities to live, work and raise families.

I know from firsthand experience how important intervention and communication can be in order to stop a person from acting out in a violent manner. That is why I support House Bill 4145. This bill seeks to prevent escalation in violent behavior from individuals who threaten schools or places of worship by ensuring they have access to mental health treatment and supervised probation.

In the current climate where threats against schools and places of worship are increasingly common, I believe we should do all we can to ensure that when a threat is made we respond in a way that keeps our community safe and provides resources and mental health treatment for people who need it.

We unfortunately know from years of data across the nation that the vast majority of individuals who commit an act of mass violence made threats beforehand that were not adequately addressed. According to a Secret Service Report analyzing acts of mass violence at schools from 2008 to 2017, 83% of perpetrators "shared verbal, written, visual, or video communications that referenced their intent to carry out an attack, threatened the target, and/or threatened others." (U.S. Secret Service, Protecting America's Schools, pg. 45, 2019).

In May 2019 I was confronted with an opportunity to address a threat to a school and I am thankful I was able to respond. Today this House Judiciary Committee and the Legislature has an opportunity to make it easier to respond to threats sooner and I ask that you take action and pass House Bill 4145. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keanon Lowe", written in a cursive style.

Keanon Lowe