

## **Testimony in Support of SB 426**

**TO:** Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Committee Members

**FR:** Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault

**DT:** February 14, 2023

**RE: Testimony to the Senate Education Committee on Toxics Free Schools SB 426**

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Committee Members,

My name is Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault and I am writing to support SB 426. I am also the mother of a childhood cancer survivor. On September 21, 2018 my thirteen year-old daughter Zion was diagnosed with stage four Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Her fight was long and she nearly succumbed to her illness. Zion was raised in a neighborhood surrounded by heavy industrial facilities. Many of these businesses use chemicals that are known carcinogens, including pesticides.

Zion is now 18, cancer free, about to graduate high school and begin her college career.

As a mother of a cancer survivor, and knowing the dangers of exposing children to chemicals that can impact their health, I am very passionate about SB 426. I send my children to school everyday living in fear that their school will be the victim of the next school shooting. Parents trust that their educators have the training to protect our children while in their care. The sad reality is that no amount of training will be able to fully prevent our children from harm. School needs to be a safe place for children and they don't need improper chemical exposure to be a thing they have to fear.

However, with SB 426 I can protect my children from the danger of being exposed to harmful pesticides that could negatively affect their wellbeing. In fact, children have a higher risk of negative health impacts than adults because their organs are still maturing and developing.

Toxic Free Schools will help reduce our children's exposure to dangerous pesticides on athletic fields, playgrounds, cafeterias and learning spaces. It will also strengthen the Department of Education's resources to support school districts with the "prevention-first" method of pest control. This bill will help improve communication

between the Department of Education and facility managers by implementing safe and effective pest management in our Oregon schools.

SB 426 is important to me, because it is my responsibility as a mother to uphold myself to the same standards I expect from my children's teachers. I understand that I can not protect my children from all external dangers, but I can speak up for them and their peers to be safe from external dangers that could have been prevented.

I strongly urge the Senate Education Committee to support this bill and take necessary action to protect our children from continued exposure to harmful substances.

Sincerely,

Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault