

Senate Committee on Education
Public Testimony SB 426, Feb. 21, 2023
Betty Reynolds, Ph.D.

Good afternoon, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the Committee. I'm Betty Reynolds, Past President of the Oregon School Boards Association, and past member of the West Linn Wilsonville School Board, although today I am testifying as an individual.

I'm here in support of SB 426 because I care about healthy kids and healthy schools. Beginning in 2018, I worked with Non-Toxic Wilsonville, a group of concerned community members working to reduce pesticide exposures in our town and school district. One member of the group was Rep. Courtney Neron, prior to her serving in the Legislature.

Non-Toxic Wilsonville prepared a policy analysis of the West Linn Wilsonville Integrated Pest Management Plan, with recommendations to ban the use of glyphosate, 2, 4-D and Dicamba (then classified by the World Health Organization as possible human carcinogens) and revise its Integrated Pest Management Plan to include nontoxic and mechanical alternatives to pesticides.

The analysis was based on interviews with experts, including Dr. Susan Katz, a since retired Behavioral Pediatrician and Board President of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. Her findings underscored research about known cancer risks, the particular susceptibility of infants and children, and the need to protect them by avoiding exposure to pesticides and herbicides. At the time, the multi-million dollar Monsanto decision regarding a school groundskeeper in California had come out; since then, a \$10.9B settlement will settle more than 100,000 lawsuits surrounding the use of Roundup.

Nontoxic Wilsonville appeared before the School Board several times, but the Board did not modify its plan. It appeared that compliance by many school districts was perfunctory, that pesticides were used as the first choice vs. last resort, and there was little or no evaluation of their effectiveness. The assumption by school board members was that adopting the OSU list was sufficient. There was an apparent lack of understanding that the law (ORS 634.710) provided that governing bodies could improve upon an IPM plan, greater than that required by law, or that governing bodies could "...ignore, add, or subtract from" the OSU recommended pesticide list, "...as long as the products met the requirements of ORS 634.705(5)." This adherence to a list that had not specified least toxic approaches was concerning.

For these reasons, I support SB 426, with its requirements for updating the list; use of non-chemical alternatives; training, oversight, technical assistance, and recommendations for limiting and reducing exposure to pesticides. This bill will provide much needed protections for children.

I commend Rep. Neron, and all the other sponsors as well, for following through to address this issue through SB 426. Thank you for your willingness to consider this important bill.