



February 21, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support for SB 426

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

The Children's Agenda, convened by Our Children Oregon, brings together ~127 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to advancing whole-child advocacy and improving the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families. Our collective created a 2023 legislative agenda that focuses on community-driven solutions to provide access and opportunities for all children and families.

Exposure to toxic chemicals can have lasting and detrimental effects on a child's lifelong development and health. Even in small amounts, pesticide exposures put children at higher risk of adverse health effects such as asthma, learning disabilities, and chronic illness. Children in historically disadvantaged, low-income communities, and communities of color, or those with parents who work with chemicals for their job, already bear the burden of increased exposure to harmful chemicals. Oregon children and youth should not have to worry about the potential risk of exposure in an institution meant to help them learn and grow.

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature passed SB 637 on School Integrated Pest Management as a strategy to combat toxic chemicals in Oregon schools. More than a decade later, the bill is in need of modernization in order to help schools protect student's health. **Assuring that all schools in Oregon are toxic free is a 2023 Children's Agenda priority.** We support SB 426 because people in historically and systemically disadvantaged communities already bear the brunt of increased exposures to harmful chemicals – this affects school children, faculty, and staff. Members of these communities deserve to send their loved ones to schools without having to worry about the risk of toxic chemical exposure.

SB 426 modernizes its predecessor to ensure schools are receiving better protection from toxic chemical exposure. The Toxic Free Schools Act will:

- Provide resources and technological assistance to school districts to reduce harmful pesticide use.
- Require a diverse Stakeholder Advisory Committee to help guide school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) planning.

- Modernize pesticide record-keeping processes and increase transparency for communities.

We thank you for your time and efforts improving the well-being of children and youth across the state. We urge your support of SB 426 to strengthen and modernize Oregon’s Toxic Free Schools Act.

Sincerely,

Our Children Oregon

Beyond Toxics

Oregon Environmental Council

Clackamas Women’s Services

Community Action Team, Inc.

Friends of Outdoor School

IRCO

Neighborhood Partnerships

Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries

Oregon CASA Network

Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials

Oregon Education Association

Oregon Food Bank

Oregon Kids Read

Oregon PTA

The Oregon Primary Care Association

Oregon School-Based Health Alliance

Oregon Resource Family Alliance

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Pro-Choice Oregon

Washington County Kids

Willamette Partnership

