



**Testimony in Support of SB 426, Toxics Free Schools**  
**February 21, 2023**

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Joel Iboa, I live in Eugene, and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Just Transition Alliance, a movement of communities facing environmental racism, climate change, and economic exploitation.

Oregon's BIPOC and low-income communities have historically been disproportionately harmed by pesticides. The Schools Integrated Pest Management law passed in 2009, which set guidelines for schools to lawfully and effectively manage pesticide applications on school grounds and practice the least toxic pest management to protect school children. However, this essential program continues to be unfunded. It's been 14 years since the original statute passed, which clearly demonstrates the Legislature's lack of investment in our children's health, particularly **children of color who are the most vulnerable of any at-risk community.**

We support SB 426 for three important reasons:

1. SB 426 will provide necessary monetary resources to invest in underserved schools where children are most likely to feel the harm of pesticides. A modest investment can ensure school staff adopt the least toxic methods of pest control, receive ongoing training on pesticide application recordkeeping, and learn about the effects of pesticides on the health of our children.
2. SB 426 will establish a diverse stakeholder work group convened by the Oregon Department of Education, which includes educational administrators and children's health experts.

Our educators and educational administrators were never given a role to play in the original School Integrated Pest Management law. This oversight will finally be corrected. This stakeholder group will include at least one representative from an environmental justice community to sit at the table with school facility managers, children's health experts, pesticide applicators and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) trainers, and others. SB 426 will guarantee that, for the first time in 14 years, school IPM policy and practice recommendations will be made using a transparent and equalitarian process.

3. Passing SB 426 is an important step we can take to protect school employees, including maintenance staff and teachers (who apply pesticides or teachers who are working in areas where pesticides have been applied.)

We urge you to send a clear message about the importance of the health of Oregon children by unanimously passing SB 426. With your vote, we can end an unfunded mandate and ensure that children across Oregon, regardless of race or class, go to school in a healthy, safe environment.

Sincerely,

Joel Iboa,  
Executive Director  
Oregon Just Transition Alliance