

Testimony in Support of SB 426

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

FR: Hanna Nguyen

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 Hanna Nguyen and I am writing to support SB 426. As a current college student at the University of Oregon, I believe that one's environment—especially one's academic environment—has a large effect on a person's exposure to knowledge, people, and experiences. The built conditions of my school campus, for instance, encourages alternative means of transportation such as walking and biking. The regular planting of flora and trees around campus establishes an intentional aesthetic and beauty. These things are built into my campus environment so that I am encouraged to practice healthy choices and succeed as a student.

How does any of this relate to SB 426? Toxics, particularly pesticides, are an unseen aspect of one's environment that has an immense, not-so-pretty, effect on children living in Eugene today. Although it isn't as obvious as blossoming flowers around school campuses or accessible walking infrastructures, pesticides are something we as a community must consider as a part of children's built environment and what that means for their future success as students, and more importantly, as people.

What's more, the effects of pesticides are not as invisible as one may think. Exposure to pesticides are associated with conditions such as asthma, autism, learning disabilities, and chronic illness. Not only is this an issue for those who are exposed to pesticides, it contributes to the deep inequality and higher risk that historically disadvantaged communities of color already face with toxic exposures, risk of disability, and access to quality education. When considering the question of whether or not you should support SB 426, the association between pesticide risk, adverse health conditions, as well as its effect on other social determinants of health *must* be made. Children should not have to suffer in an environment that should be a safe place to learn and play.

Moreover, I encourage the Senate Education Committee to consider this issue of equity and how SB 426 can provide resources, better record-keeping processes, and better pest management that could empower children's health and wellbeing.

I am privileged to be able to access higher education in the first place, but I would not be able to flourish without the protective conditions that were established for me growing up. This is why I am passionate about bills such as SB 426 which would support the health of children in my

community. Additionally, as someone with extensive experience with working with kids in my previous jobs, this particular population is one that I care deeply about because of how vulnerable I know they are. I strongly hope that the Senate Education Committee takes these factors into consideration and takes action to support a bill that will improve the conditions of Eugene's schools and students.

Sincerely,
Hanna Nguyen, Eugene, OR, UO Student