

February 7, 2024

Rep. Courtney Neron, Chair
House Committee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 4077 – Dash 2 Amendments

Chair Neron and members of the House Committee on Education

My name is Susan Hardy. I am a Retired Oregon School Employee (ROSE chapter of OSEA), a retired educator and an Oakridge School Board member. I retired from my position as Family Advocate for Head Start of Lane County in Oakridge over a decade ago.

In my time as a volunteer, a teacher and then Family Advocate, I did not personally see or experience the violent or dangerous behavior we hear so much about today.

Now, I do hear from friends and colleagues about times they have been hit, kicked, bitten, spit upon and more.

As a union member I have had the opportunity to visit many school districts, school buildings and staff break rooms at schools over the years. This winter I had the privilege to participate in membership drives in two of Oregon's largest school districts, meeting with staff to recruit new union members and to talk with current union members about their concerns and needs.

Among the concerns voiced are those that involve concepts and legislation that "work shouldn't hurt". Staff express that the continuing reality is that they experience violent or dangerous behavior and they don't have access to the forms to report the incidents. Not all the injuries resulting from this behavior meet the threshold of "catastrophic", which requires that they be tracked by the State of Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. So, if you get kicked, or bitten, hit or injured in any manner that does not require a doctor's release from work for more than three days there currently is no requirement that the injury be reported to the State through current Worker's Comp reporting, which is why we need HB 4077 -2, the Incident Reporting bill, that is the next step in supporting OSEA's Work Shouldn't Hurt campaign.

From that standpoint work does still hurt! It isn't that I believe that reporting these incidents will automatically cause the dangerous behavior to stop. But if we don't have a real record of what is happening, how will we ever find a way, as a collective group, to find the real solutions we need to fix the problem? The state legislation requiring an online form that we can all access and fill out as we need without having to meet the "catastrophic" threshold is one step on the

way to finding a solution. With more information, we can work toward finding what actions we need to take to help students and keep employees safe.

I absolutely support the creation of a group of stakeholders to create a method of reporting that creates a statewide incident report form (in an employee's preferred reading language) so that we can determine practices that would help prevent dangerous behavior. This would increase the state accountability of school districts to take further steps to protect workers.

It seems to me that having accurate reporting of violent or dangerous behavior at a less than catastrophic level is the next logical step, as well as continuing the current Work Shouldn't Hurt reporting requirements. And beyond that, we need to use the data we gather to look at how we actually address dangerous or violent behavior, support the students of higher need and provide a safer environment for all to learn.

Please support the dash two amendments and a technical fix that includes training to the form criteria so that the state can monitor how well our educational workforce is trained.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Susan Hardy

Retired Oregon School Employee, Oakridge Oregon