

Submitter: Elyse Murphy
On Behalf Of: Reynolds School District
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3079

I am writing today in strong support of HB 3709, which seeks to increase and expand funding for youth experiencing homelessness across Oregon. This bill is critical for ensuring that youth in unstable situations receive the support they need to access and succeed in their education and life down the road.

At Reynolds School District in East Multnomah County, we serve a significant number of McKinney-Vento students- children and youth who lack fixed, regular and adequate housing. These students face unique challenges that directly impact their ability to attend school consistently, engage in learning, and ultimately graduate. While existing funding has helped provide some stability through transportation, school supplies and basic necessities, the need far exceeds current resources.

Key Changes Proposed in HB 3709:

Extending Eligibility to Youth ages Birth-24: By expanding the age range, HB 3709 acknowledges that young people and young families often face housing instability beyond traditional school-age years. This extension ensures that support is available during critical transitional periods. Providing assistance to individuals ages Birth-24 not only helps in addressing immediate needs but also contributes to breaking up cycles of poverty and promoting long-term stability. From the perspective of our district, increasing support to children before they enter school-age would make a significant impact on our ability to meet the needs of everyone in our McKinney-Vento program. Often, when children enter school, that will be the first time their family has become aware of the supports available to them because of their housing instability. However, their situation has continued to worsen, making the support we have to offer less effective. It is critical that outreach and identification of these young families is made a top priority, so that when they arrive in Kindergarten, they may have some stability and can focus on their education.

HB 3709 would allow us to:

Provide more direct support to families including temporary housing assistance, hygiene supplies and emergency aid.

Increase outreach efforts, so that no child falls through the cracks due to unstable housing.

Strengthen partnerships with local shelters and community organizations creating a stronger safety net for our most vulnerable students.

Without additional funding, too many students remain at risk of dropping out, falling behind academically, or experiencing other long-term consequences from housing instability. Investing in homeless youth is not just about meeting an immediate need -

it's about breaking cycles of poverty and giving every child a fair chance at success.

I urge you to pass HB 3709 and ensure that Oregon's students experiencing houselessness have the resources they need to thrive. Thank you for your time and commitment to supporting