



February 25, 2025

### **SchoolHouse Connection Supports HB 3079**

To the Chair, Representative Annessa Hartman, and Honorable Members of the Oregon State House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services:

SchoolHouse Connection (SHC) is a national nonprofit organization that works to address child and youth homelessness through education. We partner with legislators, educators, young people and families with lived experience, and advocates on policy reform to improve outcomes and reduce youth homelessness. This has included collaboration with Oregon advocates on several policy reform initiatives over the years.

SHC supports HB 3079. We believe this legislation increases support for unaccompanied homeless youth – those not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian – as well as provides needed assistance to children experiencing homelessness from birth to preK-12, and expectant parents. Children under 3 years old and unaccompanied youth are among the most vulnerable and underserved categories of young people experiencing homelessness across the U.S, which makes this legislation critically important.

You have heard other testimony that Oregon has the fourth highest number of youth experiencing homelessness in the nation. According to the National Center for Homeless Education, 21,871 preK-12 students in Oregon experienced homelessness during the 2022-23 school year<sup>1</sup>. This represents approximately 4 percent of the state's total preK-12 student population. About 1,015 of these were unaccompanied youth. Additionally, 6,561 children under age 3 were identified as experiencing homelessness<sup>2</sup>, with only 9.14% enrolled in Early Head Start.

The highest percentage of homeless youth are staying with others or doubled-up (71%), with the second most common situation being unsheltered students (12.6%), followed by students staying in a shelter (9.9%).<sup>3</sup> HB 3079 provides these Oregon students and their families needed support that, notably, would start in early childhood and effectively remove barriers to stable housing and educational achievement as they matriculate through school and graduate.

This is notable because lack of a high school diploma is the single greatest determinant of adult homelessness. This bill can help improve school readiness and enable more students to overcome hurdles to graduation so that they are able to avoid homelessness later in life. For these reasons we urge you to support HB 3079. Thank you.

*Rodd Monts*

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Homeless Education (2024). [Oregon](#).

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Homeless Education (2024). [Oregon](#).

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Homeless Education (2024). [Oregon](#).