



Representative Hoa Nguyen
Oregon House District 48

HB 3079 - Youth Homelessness Study

2/25 House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

Thank you, Chair, vice chair and members of the committee. For the record I am State Representative Hoa Nguyen, for House District 48, which includes outer Southeast Portland and North Clackamas County. I am an educator in Clackamas Education Service District. I have spent 20 years working with students from diverse backgrounds, many of whom face significant barriers to academic success due to housing instability.

I am here today to voice my strong support for House Bill 3079 because it takes critical steps to address youth homelessness, a crisis that directly impacts the ability of students to learn, graduate, and break the cycle of poverty.

Research consistently shows that housing instability is one of the greatest barriers to student success. According to the National Center for Homeless Education (2022), students experiencing homelessness are **87% more likely to drop out of school** compared to their housed peers. In Oregon alone, the Oregon Department of Education identified over **21,000** students as homeless in the 2021-2022 school year. These students face **chronic absenteeism**, higher rates of disciplinary action, and lower academic performance.

The **McKinney-Vento Act** ensures that homeless students have access to education, but without stable housing, they struggle to complete homework, attend school regularly, and engage in the learning environment. A 2020 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that **stable housing is directly correlated with higher test scores and graduation rates**.

HB 3079 would provide much-needed resources to prevent youth from falling into homelessness, ensuring that students remain engaged in their education and have a path toward a successful future.

1. **Updating Cost Estimates for Homeless Youth Programs** – By requiring the Department of Human Services to update its cost estimates for youth homelessness programs, Oregon can better allocate resources to meet the growing need for intervention services.
2. **Dedicating 30% of DHS and Housing and Community Services Budgets to Reducing Youth Homelessness** – This measure aligns with best practices from states like California and Washington, which have seen reductions in youth homelessness through targeted budget allocations (Chapin Hall, 2021).

3. **Expanding Emergency Housing Eligibility** – By including pregnant individuals and children from birth to kindergarten age, the bill ensures that vulnerable populations receive immediate housing assistance, supporting early childhood development and long-term academic success.
4. **Emphasizing Culturally Responsive and Evidence-Based Practices** – Homelessness disproportionately affects students of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and those in foster care. By mandating culturally competent interventions, the bill promotes equitable access to housing and educational stability.

The pandemic exacerbated youth homelessness, and without immediate action, more students will experience instability that derails their education. Investing in housing solutions for youth now will **reduce long-term costs** associated with homelessness, including emergency services, law enforcement, and public health expenditures. The University of Chicago's Chapin Hall study (2021) found that every **\$1 invested in youth homelessness prevention saves \$4 in future social service costs**.

HB 3079 represents a proactive, research-backed approach to addressing one of the most pressing barriers to student success. By prioritizing housing stability, we are not only supporting our students but also strengthening Oregon's future workforce and economy.

I urge the members of this committee to pass this critical legislation and give our students the stability they need to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.