

Good afternoon, Chair Neron, Vice Chairs McIntire and Dobson, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Susan Merklin-Rotvik and I am an Oregon School Employees Association member and Special Education Assistant in Lake Oswego supporting students with autism in the ACCESS program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 3357.

I had a recent experience that emphasizes the need for this statewide safety reporting system in our schools. While working with the student I support, another student stacked the classroom's "scoop" chairs— think of the shape of a Frito "scoop" chip— and began trying to climb on top of the stack. Unsurprisingly, this student and the stack of chairs came tumbling down. When they did, the student and all the chairs they had been standing on crashed into my back, completely knocking the wind out of me. I saw stars and I could not breathe or stand up. Nonetheless, since our classrooms are so bare-bones, I had to finish out the day and continued working while in severe pain. Once the school day was done, the case manager gave me a paper copy of an incident form, which I completed in a great deal of pain. The school secretary could not locate the workmans comp form before I left for home, so she emailed it to me the Monday of the following week, when I was then made to attempt to recollect the events of days prior.

The centralized reporting system proposed by HB 3357 would have allowed me to quickly complete the documentation needed to track these types of injuries and would give staff like me peace of mind and confidence in knowing that my injury had been logged and recorded so that measures can be take in the future to prevent these types of injuries from happening.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I respectfully urge an aye vote on HB 3357.

Sincerely,
Susan Merklin-Rotvik
OSEA member, SPED Assistant