

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

For the record, my name is Jennifer Ford and I am a State Testing Coordinator from OSEA's David Douglas Chapter 40, Vice President of our Chapter, and an avid supporter of HB 3357.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill today.

As someone who has worked in middle school education for 17 years, I have seen first hand the challenges educators and classified staff face regarding workplace safety. Incidents of violence inflicted on adults by dysregulated students often go unreported due to fear of retaliation, lack of clear reporting process, or inconsistent policies across districts. This bill would provide a standardized, confidential, and accessible way for school employees to report safety issues, ensuring concerns are properly documented and eventually addressed.

A statewide reporting system is critical for several reasons:

1. Accountability and transparency- it allows education officials and lawmakers to track trends, identify problem areas, and allocate resources effectively to ensure school safety.
2. Protection for educators and staff– many educators do not feel safe or comfortable reporting incidents. A centralized system that employees can access themselves ensures employees don't run the risk of being encouraged by admin to not report incidents.
3. Improved learning environments– when staff feel safe, they can focus on their work, leading to better support and academic outcomes for students.
4. Prevention and intervention– by collecting and analyzing data, the state can proactively address safety risks rather than reacting to crises.

We owe it to our educators, school staff, and students to prioritize safety in our schools. HB 3357 is a necessary step toward ensuring a safer and more supportive work environment in education.

I respectfully urge you to pass this bill and demonstrate your commitment to those who dedicate their lives to educating and supporting our students.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Ford
OSEA David Douglas Chapter 40 Vice President