

Submitter: Ocean Punsalan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3076

My name is Ocean Punsalan. I am a senior at Lakeridge High School and a member of Lake Oswego's Youth Leadership Council. Among my favorite activities as a student in Oregon is my Jazz band class. Music, to many, is a safe space. However, as powerful as music is, music at school doesn't feel like a safe space because it is not conducted in a safe space.

To me, a safe space is a classroom where music rehearsals aren't disrupted for lock down rehearsals, a place where the loudest sound comes from a drum solo, not the fear of something far worse, a place where young musicians perform with confidence, not a place where they wonder if their school will be the next statistic. I believe that my concern for the safety of my classroom stems from an experience in my 2nd grade year at Oregon's Hope Chinese Charter School (HCCS).

As we sat, listening to our daily story time, our teacher received a call: there was a threat towards our school. We immediately entered a lockdown. Chairs scraped against the floor as we scrambled to find hiding spots, our small bodies pressing into corners, beneath desks, anywhere we thought we might be safe. The lights flicked off, and the room was swallowed in an eerie hush where it remained for a substantial amount of time.

While, following the lockdown, my classmates and I had discussed how unfortunate it was that that had happened, today, I feel that the opposite is true. I feel lucky that the threat was only a threat. I feel lucky that, unlike Apalachee High School, Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary School, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Uvalde's Robb Elementary School, Virginia Tech, Red Lake Senior High School, no one was killed at HCCS; lucky that, unlike Rachel Scott, Cassie Bernall, Daniel Rohrbough, Lauren Townsend, Kelly Fleming, Charlotte Bacon, and the hundreds of students killed in school shootings, I am alive; lucky that, unlike the thousands of families who have conducted funerals for their children as a result of gun violence, my family does not have to.

Please help to protect Oregon's students by passing HB 3076.