

Submitter: Lemia Mahayni

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3007

Statement of Lemia Mahayni in support of House Bill 3007

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education:

I'm writing to communicate my strong support of HB 3007.

Making schools part of a student's brain injury recovery plan ensures that their school does not create harm or challenges to the student during recovery. It also ensures that children with disadvantages such as lower health insurance coverage, or other situations resulting in a lack of health advocacy do not experience further disadvantages by having inadequate attention given to their brain injury in the classroom, gym, or playground. The school does not replace the child's support network, but it should definitely be part of it. It is not enough to assume individual teachers, principals, and school boards will embrace this. A standard must be set so that all of Oregon's children get the attention they need.

As someone who suffered a brain injury in adulthood, I know that advocacy and state laws were the two key factors in getting the care that I needed. My recovery would have been a disaster without those tools. Expecting a child, a child with a brain injury, to communicate needs they may not even know they have, is simply foolish. Adults need to make sure that a student has and adheres to a care plan. That has to include the school, where students spend the majority of their waking hours.

HB 3007 will help students who are recovering from brain injuries by requiring schools to provide appropriate, person-centered, academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and physical accommodations to ensure that the student has the best possible recovery.

No student ever wants to suffer a brain injury, but many still do. During their recovery, they will struggle with their classwork, their social interactions, their mental and behavioral health, and with physical pain. The last thing a school should do is make it harder for the student to recover.

HB 3007 requires a school to act in the best interest of the student, and give them the accommodations they need during their brain injury recovery. If, because of their brain injury, they need help with classwork, or homework, or with their friends, the school should be providing that help. If they need physical accommodation in their classrooms because of the lights, or the noises, or whatever, they should get those accommodations, as well. HB 3007 will help ensure that students recovering from brain injuries get the accommodations they need.

Please support HB 3007. Thank you!

Signed,

Lemia Mahayni