



June 2, 2025

SchoolHouse Connection Supports HB 3970

To the Chair, Representative Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Pham, and Honorable Members of the Oregon State House Rules Committee:

SchoolHouse Connection (SHC) supports HB 3970 because we believe it would improve educational outcomes for Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth and families. SHC is a national nonprofit organization that works to address child and youth homelessness through education. We partner with legislators, educators, young people and families with lived experience, and advocates on policy reform to improve outcomes and reduce youth homelessness. This has included collaboration with Oregon advocates on several policy reform initiatives over the years.

We believe HB 3970 would provide funding to improve academic achievement by expanding or enhancing existing shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, behavioral health and related resources for youth experiencing homelessness. This legislation recognizes the urgent needs of unaccompanied homeless youth—those who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian—as well as children from birth through grade 12, including expectant parents. These are among the most vulnerable and underserved young people in the nation, and targeted investment is essential to their well-being.

Oregon has the fourth highest number of youth experiencing homelessness in the US. According to the National Center for Homeless Education, 21,871 preK-12 students in Oregon experienced homelessness during the 2022-23 school year¹. This represents approximately 4 percent of the state's total preK-12 student population. About 1,015 of these were unaccompanied youth. Additionally, 6,561 children under age 3 were identified as experiencing homelessness², with only 9.14% enrolled in Early Head Start.

HB 3970 provides these Oregon students and their families needed support that, notably, would start in early childhood and effectively remove barriers to stable housing and high school graduation.

This is notable because lack of a high school diploma is the single greatest determinant of adult homelessness. This bill can help improve school readiness and enable more students to overcome hurdles to graduation so that they are able to avoid homelessness later in life. For these reasons we urge you to support HB 3970. Thank you.

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¹ National Center for Homeless Education (2024). [Oregon](#).

² National Center for Homeless Education (2024). [Oregon](#).