

Submitter: Rosie Laurie
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4149

Chair Rep. Zach Hudson and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Rosie Laurie, and I am writing to express my strong support for Oregon HB 4149. I have worked with youth experiencing homelessness for the past 10 years, and I have seen firsthand how quickly educational stability can be lost when a young person does not have a safe place to sleep, consistent transportation, or a reliable adult advocate.

Students experiencing homelessness face constant disruption—moving between shelters, couch-surfing situations, or unsafe living conditions. These disruptions often lead to missed school days, delayed enrollment, gaps in services, and long-term academic consequences. Too often, youth who want to attend school are held back not by motivation or ability, but by administrative delays, documentation barriers, or the lack of a stable guardian to navigate the system.

HB 4149 is an important and practical step toward ensuring that students experiencing homelessness can access school immediately and without unnecessary obstacles. Fast-tracking access to school is not just a bureaucratic improvement—it is an urgent intervention. Every day of delayed enrollment increases the risk of a student falling behind, disengaging, or dropping out entirely. For youth experiencing homelessness, school is often the most stable part of their lives. It provides structure, safety, meals, trusted adults, and connection to resources that can change their trajectory.

In my work, I have supported youth who desperately wanted to stay in school but were forced to wait days or weeks due to enrollment delays or lack of paperwork. These delays can be devastating. Students experiencing homelessness already carry immense stress, and when the system makes them prove eligibility, locate documents, or wait for approvals, it creates yet another barrier—one that many simply cannot overcome.

Fast access to school protects a student's right to an education and strengthens outcomes for the entire community. When youth are connected to school quickly, they are more likely to remain engaged, receive supportive services, build relationships with caring adults, and stay on track toward graduation. HB 4149 reinforces Oregon's commitment to equity by recognizing that homelessness should never be the reason a child or youth is denied or delayed access to education.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to vote YES on HB 4149. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to Oregon's students.

Sincerely,
Rosie Laurie
Regional Homelessness Initiatives in Central Oregon
Lead staff of the Local CoC
Lead Staff for Regional SSP
Former Program Manager/ Case Manager working with Homeless Youth, Youth Shelters, Local Youth Action Board