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February 6th, 2026

RE: Support for HB 4149

Dear Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Committee on Education:

On behalf of **Jackson Street Youth Services**, I respectfully submit this letter in strong support of **HB 4149**, which directs school districts to adopt policies that provide for the immediate enrollment, school placement, and provision of services to students experiencing homelessness.

Jackson Street Youth Services serves youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, housing instability, and family crisis. For the young people we work with, access to school is often one of the most critical stabilizing forces in their lives — yet it is also one of the first opportunities lost when housing becomes unstable. Too often, youth face delays enrolling in school due to missing records, lack of transportation, confusion about guardianship requirements, or unclear district processes. These barriers can prevent youth from reengaging in education at the very moment when stability and routine matter most.

HB 4149 is a necessary and practical solution because it reinforces what we already know: educational access should not depend on whether a young person has paperwork, a fixed address, or an adult advocate available to navigate systems on their behalf.

We strongly support the bill's emphasis on **immediate enrollment and school placement**, as well as its focus on ensuring that students experiencing homelessness receive the services and supports they need without delay. When a student is forced to wait days or weeks to enroll, they are far more likely to disengage entirely, fall behind academically, and face long-term consequences that can include chronic absenteeism, increased mental health crises, and a higher likelihood of long-term homelessness.

HB 4149 also supports stronger and more consistent implementation of the **federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**, which already requires school districts to remove barriers to enrollment and ensure educational stability for students experiencing homelessness. While McKinney-Vento provides essential protections, implementation can vary widely across districts, creating confusion and inconsistency for families, youth, and service providers. HB 4149 helps ensure that Oregon's school districts have clear, uniform policies and procedures so that students receive the protections they are entitled to regardless of where in the state they are seeking enrollment.



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We also support the bill's recognition that **coordination between schools and community-based providers is essential**. Youth-serving organizations like ours are often the first point of contact for young people who are unsheltered or fleeing unsafe home environments. When school districts have clear, consistent policies and designated points of contact, it becomes far easier for community providers to partner with schools to ensure youth can enroll immediately and remain connected to their education.

Educational continuity is one of the strongest protective factors available to young people experiencing homelessness. Maintaining school stability helps youth remain connected to trusted adults, access meals and counseling, and stay on track toward graduation and future employment. HB 4149 supports these outcomes by requiring districts to strengthen processes that remove barriers and prioritize the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

HB 4149 reflects Oregon's commitment to ensuring that all students — regardless of housing status — have equitable access to education and the opportunity to succeed. We urge the committee to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to Oregon's children and youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kendra Phillips".

Kendra Phillips
Executive Director
Jackson Street Youth Services