

House passes student protection bills

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

HB 2062 And HB 2063 Create the Strongest Student Protection Regulations in the Nation

SALEM, Ore. — The House on Wednesday passed two bills, HB 2062 and HB 2063, aimed at protecting kids from educator and school employee misconduct. The bills each passed by a vote of 58-0.

"With these bills, Oregon will clearly have the strongest laws protecting the safety of school children in the nation, bar none," said Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis/Philomath), who chairs the House Education Committee and championed this bill through the committee process. "With the passage of HB 2062, we have demonstrated that this state puts the safety of children first and is committed to giving schools the best possible tools when they hire new employees."

HB 2062 bans secret agreements between school employees who engaged in misconduct and school employers. The bill also requires training on avoiding, identifying and reporting sexual conduct and requires the transfer of information about substantiated allegations of sexual conduct and abuse during the new hire process. The bill covers all school employees in public and private school settings.

“It is crucial that parents have the peace of mind that we are protecting their kids when they send them to school every day,” said Representative Michael Dembrow, (D-Portland). “It is important for our children that they can feel safe in their schools and look to their teachers as guardians,” added Representative Suzanne VanOrman (D-Hood River).

The Oregon Education Association, Oregon School Employees Association, Oregon School Boards Association and Confederation of Oregon School Administrators played a vital role in cooperating with other stakeholders to get the legislation written and passed through committee. The bills were passed unanimously out of committee with bipartisan support.

“Both sides of the aisle have been working together to achieve the passage of House Bills 2062 and 2063, alongside groups representing teachers, classified employees, school boards and administrators,” said Representative Betty Komp (D-Woodburn), who was part of the interim workgroup tasked with initially developing the policy. “It’s been rewarding to watch all these groups work together to ensure that we continue making schools safe for students.”

Protecting Oregon's most vulnerable citizens from abuse is part of the House Democrats' 2009 Roadmap for Oregon's future. HB 2062 and HB 2063 are cornerstones of that effort.

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