



from the

OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN L. MANNIX

For Immediate Release

Date: February 20, 2024

Contact: Michelle Mhoon, Chief of Staff

Email: Michelle.Mhoon@oregonlegislature.gov

Representative Mannix Applauds House Passage of Oregon's Student Protection Law – House Bill 4160

SALEM, OR – Today, Representative Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer/North Salem) applauded the House passage of Oregon's Student Protection Law, or [House Bill 4160](#). This is one of Representative Mannix's two priority bills for the 2024 Legislative Session. House Bill 4160 is designed to reduce the opportunity for predatory sexual behavior by educators who work with children, by:

Changing the definition of "student" so that the individual is considered a student for a full calendar year after graduation/leaving the school. Under current law, a "student" remains a student only 90 days after graduation or leaving the school.

In Oregon, licensed professional counselors must wait 5 years before engaging in a sexual or romantic relationship with former clients. This change is supported by other Oregon statutes governing similar influential relationships.

"I am proud to see this legislation make it across the *first* finish line. We know teachers and other educators often serve as the role of mentor, counselor, and occasionally, a parental figure. These relationships are extremely influential in a student's life, and unfortunately in rare circumstances, we know legal boundaries are necessary to ensure a student is properly protected," **said Representative Mannix.**

Representative Mannix worked with the Salem-Keizer School District and other school authorities to bring this legislation forward. The district has witnessed dangerous grooming behaviors by school staff with students close to graduation from high school and recognized a need for change.

"On behalf of Salem-Keizer Public Schools, we thank Representative Mannix and all members of the Oregon delegation that voted in support of House Bill 4160. This legislation adds a critical new stitch in the legal fabric that keeps our students safe," **said Salem-Keizer Superintendent Andrea Castañeda.**

This bipartisan legislation was co-sponsored by Representative Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), an educator, parent, and Chair of the House Committee on Education.

“It is critically important for Oregon teachers to have ongoing professional and appropriate boundaries and also to allow our education providers to be able to investigate any inappropriate or predatory behavior,” **said Representative Neron.**

“We must allow for an education provider to hold predators accountable and ensure our schools remain safe places for students.”

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education (NASDTEC) recently recognized the need to protect vulnerable students in this category, passing model legislation called the Protection of Professional Educator Boundaries Act.

“I want to thank the Salem-Keizer School District for their collaboration throughout this process and urge the Senate to quickly pass this legislation into law to ensure the protection of our students,” **said Representative Mannix.**

To read more about additional legislative priorities for Representative Mannix, visit the [2024 Legislative Session](#) tab on his website.

###