



*From the Offices of Representatives Levy, Hudson, Marsh and Rieke Smith*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Oregon Legislature Passes Bill to Enshrine Support for Homeless Students**

**SALEM, Ore.** – Oregon students experiencing homelessness will benefit from clearer, state-level guarantees to remain enrolled and supported in school, as the federal [McKinney-Vento Act](#) is codified into Oregon law through the passage of [HB 4149](#).

During the 2024–25 school year, 21,122 Oregon students, approximately 4 percent of all students statewide, were identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services, underscoring the urgent need to protect and codify these critical educational supports.

“This bill protects some of our most vulnerable students: those experiencing homelessness. When a child’s housing situation is unstable, school can be one of the few sources of consistency and support in their life. This legislation helps preserve that stability during an incredibly difficult time,” said **Rep. Emerson Levy** (D - Bend, South Redmond, Tumalo & Sisters), chief sponsor of the bill. “Codifying the federal McKinney-Vento Act provides clarity and consistency for students, families, and school districts, and helps ensure these rights don’t depend on shifting federal priorities.”

The measure ensures that students without stable housing can enroll in school immediately, stay connected to their school communities and access transportation, extracurricular activities and essential services without delay.

Last year, during federal budget discussions, including conversations around HR 1, the legislature became aware that the McKinney-Vento program could be vulnerable to federal cuts. While the program was ultimately preserved, that uncertainty highlighted the importance of ensuring these protections remain in place at the state level.

**Rep. Zach Hudson** (D - East Multnomah County), chair of the House Committee on Education, noted: "Students who don't have a stable place to live have been protected by federal law for a long time, but there is a lot of uncertainty about the Federal landscape right now. HB 4149 puts those protections into state statute to make sure that Oregon students can count on them."

The measure safeguards and affirms longstanding protections already followed by Oregon school districts, ensuring students experiencing homelessness can enroll and fully participate in school without barriers such as missing records, transportation challenges, or placement disputes. It also reinforces coordination among schools, social service providers, and state agencies to strengthen support for students and families experiencing homelessness.

"Homeless youth struggle to get to school and have a much lower graduation rate, and the lack of a high school diploma is a key indicator for adult chronic homelessness," said **Rep. Pam Marsh** (D - Ashland). "As Chair of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness, it's clear to me that we must do everything we can to interrupt this awful cycle."

Maintaining school stability can significantly improve academic outcomes, graduation rates and long-term wellbeing for students experiencing housing instability.

"This bill is not about politics. It is about protecting opportunity. It is about making sure that homelessness does not become a lifelong academic setback. And it is about living up to our responsibility to serve every student in every community," said **Rep. Rieke Smith** (D - Wilsonville, Sherwood, King City, Tigard).

HB 4149 now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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