



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Legislation to keep children safe in Oregon schools approved by Senate
SB 46 and SB 47 are part of a package that will help prevent abuse in classrooms

SALEM –Two pieces of legislation that protect Oregon students were approved by the Oregon Senate today. Through extending the Oregon Department of Education’s authority to require fingerprinting of employees or contractors on a school campus, increasing oversight of student teachers in the classroom, and setting standards for teachers transferring from new jurisdictions, the bills are a major step towards addressing concerns about misconduct in the classroom.

“A safe and secure learning environment is vital to the success of our children,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “Students and parents both need to feel confident that the classroom is a safe place. This legislation gets us closer to that objective.”

SB 46 extends the authority of the Department of Education to require fingerprinting of any public school employee, regardless of whether the employee has direct, unsupervised contact with a child. The bill will also allow the Department the discretion to fingerprint contractors who will have direct, unsupervised contact with students.

SB 47 authorizes the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to hold student teachers who have committed crimes to the same standards as current teachers. Additionally, SB 47 prohibits issuing an Oregon teaching license to someone who has committed an offense in another jurisdiction when that offense is grounds for revoking a license in Oregon.

“I believe that the legislation we passed today and the reforms that will follow this session will give Oregon the strongest child protections laws in the nation,” said Sen. Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), chair of the Senate Committee on Education and General Government.

Both bills were the product of the interim House and Senate Committees on Education, who worked with education advocates and regulatory agencies throughout 2008. Complementary legislation addressing this issue is expected later in the session from the House.

“Protecting our students and providing them with excellent educational opportunities is one of our top priorities,” said Senator Vicki Walker (D-Eugene), who chaired the interim Senate Committee on Education and General Government. “These bipartisan reforms make common sense.”

The bill will now move to the House.

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