

## Testimony in Support of Oregon House Bill 2835

My name is Dr. Don Crawford and I am the former Executive Director of the award-winning Arthur Academy charter schools and an adjunct professor of Education at Portland State University. I own and operate an educational publishing company here in Oregon and received my Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Oregon.

I support HB 2835 because it removes the unnecessary element of force from the Common Core State Standards leaving the decisions about implementation at the local school district level. My professional opinion is that the Common Core standards are ill-conceived, vague, and not measurable—making them useless. My 35 years of experience in education tells me that they not going to materially improve K-12 education in Oregon or anywhere else. Millions of other Americans oppose these standards. However, and this is important, you do not need to share our opinion to know that HB 2835 is a good idea. Leaving the decision about whether or not to adopt these standards up to locally accountable school boards and district administrators is a really smart thing to do. Here's why.

If there is anything about the Common Core that is a good idea, school districts can choose to implement it. There is nothing to stop them. In other words, if it is such a good idea, let them put it in their budgets and do it. At the same time anything that is counter-productive can be dropped. Most importantly, with the freedom HB 2835 allows, if school districts choose to implement parts of the Common Core that don't work out or that are bad for kids, parents and teachers will be able to speak up locally and get those decisions changed.

The best way to find out if outcomes are improving is to allow school districts to use independent achievement tests instead of the Smarter Balanced Assessment to measure the effect of any new policies. Under HB 2835 districts would be allowed to do that, which is really, really important. Why? Under the Common Core the same people who set up these questionable standards are making up the tests to evaluate the effectiveness of their ideas. They are being allowed to rig the game!

Let me give you a simple analogy. Because the Smarter Balanced Assessment has not been proven to be externally valid by comparing it to other tests of achievement, it is like a test of pig-latin. If you gave tests in pig-latin not surprisingly, scores would be low. If schools then put a lot of time and effort into teaching pig-latin, scores on the pig-latin test would go up. But are the schools really any better than before? You have no way of knowing if all you give are the pig-latin tests. There is, as of yet, no evidence that the Smarter Balanced Assessment is validly measuring anything worthwhile. HB 2835 would allow districts to choose among the wide variety of off-the-shelf achievement tests (which have national norms to allow comparisons) to see if the parts of the Common Core they choose to implement are really improving educational outcomes.

Growing up I was told there were three ways to do things: the right way, the wrong way, and the Army way. The point being that in the Army you had to do things their way, whether it was right or wrong. As things stand in Oregon schools now, everyone must do it the Common Core way, whether it is right or wrong. Please pass HB 2835, so we can allow local school districts the freedom to find the right way to educate our children.

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