

To Senate Committee on Education

Re: SB 513

Hearing: 3/10/21 at 3:15 pm

Support for SB 513

A number of years ago Barbara Roberts, former Governor of Oregon, spoke to a public gathering at the Salem Public Library. She made many comments about her role and responsibilities as leader of the state of Oregon. One remark that made an impact upon me was her description of visits to Oregon school classrooms, where she spoke about citizenship and how laws are made. Her alarm was that when students were asked very simple questions about government and being a citizen, there was a complete absence of any pertinent knowledge in this area.

Certainly there have been valiant efforts on the part of organizations such as the YMCA "Youth in Government", League of Women Voter's civics education program, and AAUW's "Civics Trek" program to engage young people actively in learning about government. These projects involve only a handful of school-aged youth. It is quite apparent that the equitable way to approach civics learning for all students is to provide standardized instruction in the public schools.

In order for our future citizens (school children now) to actively participate in government in a positive way, this bill provides a plan to require that basic civics education is required for graduation. The knowledge of how to make changes by voting and effecting legislation provides a far better alternative than what we have witnessed recently by Americans who caused an insurrection at our National Capitol on July 6.

I strongly urge your committee to support SB513.

Joyce Zook, AAUW of Oregon member in Salem, Oregon