

Thank you, Chair and members of the Committee. I am Mary Botkin, an elected member of the Multnomah Education Service District Board of Directors. Many of you remember me from my many years with AFSCME representing the men and women working in the Adult and Juvenile system. In that role I often found myself in the position to advocate for the men and women in custody as well. After decades of work on the custody end of the criminal justice system, I now find myself on the end where we can truly make the words, "end the school to prison pipeline" mean something.

MESD provides educational services to students who have faced trauma, homelessness, some have serious physical disabilities or may be headed to the criminal justice system or already in it. Every day our staff tell our students that if they study hard, stay on the program in front of them, they can have a bright future. That their past does not define their future. We tell them that here we believe in new beginnings and 2nd Chances.

Unfortunately, these words ring empty at times because for some reason Oregon continues to bar employment to potential staff with certain criminal backgrounds. Oregon law maintains a statutory list of criminal convictions that bar individuals from ever working in a K-12 setting. Currently that list includes violent crimes and crimes involving children as well as **non-violent, non-person** offenses. For some reason we have failed to move forward and remove non-violent, non-person crimes from the "forever" list of crimes barring a person from work, any work in a K-12 setting. While we tell our students, we believe in Second Chances we cannot tell potential, talented staff the same thing.

We are here today to ask that the Committee take another look at the list of "forever crimes" barring potential staff with colorful backgrounds from working in a K-12 environment. Of course, we would never suggest that a person with a violent criminal history or one involving children be included. But those individuals convicted of a non-person, non-violent crimes deserve a second chance.

We would like to be one of those 2nd Chance employers in Oregon. We would like to be able to look our students face to face and tell them, "If you study hard, stay on the program in front of you then you could work right here! Because your past does not define your future."

Thank you.