



TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Jon Chandler (jchandler@oregonhba.com)
RE: HB 2985
DATE: March 27, 2013

The Oregon Home Builders Association supports HB 2985.

We have been strong supporters of workforce development programs for many years. The residential construction industry depends on a base of trained workers in crafts ranging from carpentry to sheet metal to welding to electrical to plumbing ... most of which were part of the high school curriculum not that many years ago, but which have been all but eliminated in many school districts.

So we have strongly advocated for restoration of shop and other vocational classes - referred to in educational circles as Career & Technical Education, or CTE - and were successful in the 2011 session in having a CTE program established and funded. We hope to expand on that success this session.

But the money for the classes is only part of the story, and that is where HB 2985 becomes very important. Exposure to and teaching regarding vocational skills is well and good, but without a context for how they might be used and what opportunities exist for their use outside the classroom, the CTE classes could well become just another elective for students to select. HB 2985 would provide that critical context, by funding the vocational organizations within which the CTE classes can operate. In turn, these organizations not only connect students with employment opportunities and critical peer group support, but they provide valuable mentoring both in the field being taught and in leadership, business and other skills that will be of value to the students throughout their life.

The FFA (Future Farmers of America) is probably the preeminent of these groups; it has been so successful that it has its own independent funding stream, separate and apart from HB 2985. But there are many others - VICA (Vocational and Industrial Clubs of America, now Skills USA), FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), FHA (Future Homemakers of America, now Family, Career & Community Leaders of America), DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) - all of whom used to be commonplace in many if not most high schools in Oregon, but which have all but vanished today... an unfortunate occurrence which HB 2985 will help correct.

These are valuable adjuncts to classroom education, both CTE classes as well as students' overall academic experience, and they are deserving of state support.

We urge your support for HB 2985.

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