

JACKIE DINGFELDER
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 23



OREGON STATE SENATE
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

To: Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee
From: Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Senate District 23
Date: March 26th, 2013

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 755

Chair Hass and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these written comments in support of SB 755 regarding the Oregon Minority Teacher Act.

The Oregon Minority Teacher Act was first drafted in 1991. In the 1991 Act, the Oregon Legislature recognized that there was a disparity between a growing diversity in our student population and the predominantly Caucasian teacher workforce. A diverse teaching population is crucial in ensuring that there is an accurate and proportional representation of culture in our schools.

The 1991 Act set forth goals which aimed to increase the number of minority teachers and administrators in Oregon. The goals established in 1991 sought to make the number of minority teachers proportionate to the student population enrolled in Oregon public schools. A report done in 2011 found that the goals set forth by the 1991 Oregon Minority Teacher Act had not been reached. In fact, the discrepancy between Oregon's minority students and minority teachers had grown in the last decade. Oregon has clearly not met the goals set forth by the 1991 Act, and this demands a remedy.

SB 755 amends the goals set forth in the 1991 Act to increase the number of minority teachers, administrators and students enrolled in teacher preparation programs by 10% by 2015. The Act also requires that a report be submitted by July 2014 including the progress made in increasing the number of Oregon minority teachers and administrators. While setting goals is important, I would like to acknowledge that we should be doing more to improve the number of minority teachers in Oregon. In an ideal world, we would be able to fund scholarships and mentoring for prospective minority teachers. However, the current budget climate makes this an unrealistic option, and we must do what we can. One important thing we can do is pass SB 755.

Having a well-represented minority teaching population in Oregon is crucial to ensuring that Oregon's public schools are culturally diverse and that different communities are connected to Oregon's public schools through teachers and administrators. For these reasons, I ask for the committee's support of SB 755 and the Oregon Minority Teacher Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Dingfelder".

Senator Jackie Dingfelder
Senate District 23