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**Senate Bill 739: Oregon Studies**  
**Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee**  
**Andrea Morgan, Education Specialist**  
**April 2, 2013**

Good afternoon Chair Hass and members of the Senate Education Committee. For the record, I am Andrea Morgan, Education Specialist, speaking on behalf of the Oregon Education Department. I am here to provide information about Social Sciences instruction in Oregon as it relates to the provisions in SB 739. SB 739 directs the department to prepare materials for teacher training and classroom instruction in Oregon Studies and directs the department to work with a number of entities when developing Oregon Studies content standards.

### **Background**

Since 1991, Oregon has had a standards-based education system. The Academic Content Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at specified grade levels. Oregon has Social Sciences Academic Content Standards that address content in Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, History, and Social Science Analysis.

In 1999, the Legislature required that the Department of Education (ODE), in consultation with the Oregon Historical Society (OHS), develop standards and prepare materials for Oregon Studies. The standards and materials were to include “a balanced presentation of the relevant contributions to society by men and women of African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian-American and other racial groups in Oregon. Funding was not allocated to the Oregon Department of Education for this work. The Oregon Historical Society was allowed to use public funds allocated to the Society or to raise private funds for the project. ODE and OHS collaborated using a small amount of general fund dollars to create the Oregon History Project web materials and lesson plans that were aligned to the state academic content standards.

In 2001 and in 2011, the State Board of Education adopted Social Sciences Standards. In both sets of standards, Oregon Studies standards were embedded within the History, Economics, Civics and Government, and Geography standards. The most recent version of standards, adopted in 2011, were the result of over two years of work. The Social Sciences Content and Assessment Panel, a group of 35 Oregon educators, reviewed other states’ standards, national standards, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks, and the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies to inform the final Oregon standards. Various constituent groups including Social Sciences teachers, Government-to-Government members, the Oregon Heritage Commission, civic education organizations, and financial literacy organizations were specifically encouraged to review the draft standards using an on-line survey. A total of 135 respondents reviewed the draft standards and provided comments via the on-line survey. Other constituents provided written comments on the draft standards instead of/in addition to the electronic survey. Comments documents were received from Classroom Law Project, 21stCenturyEducation.org, Advocates for Personal Financial Education, and Oregon Division of Finance and Corporate Securities.

“Oregon Studies” includes history, geography, economics and civics specific to the State of Oregon. Oregon Studies instruction includes municipal, county, tribal, and state, government as well as electoral and legislative processes (ORS 329.007). Materials were developed by the Oregon Historical Society in cooperation with the

Oregon Department of Education to provide teachers with instructional support. The Oregon History Project, <http://www.ohs.org/education/oregonhistory/index.cfm>, continues to provide a wealth of resources for Oregon teachers and students K-12. Additionally, the Oregon Encyclopedia, <http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/>, provides additional topic-specific material.

Traditionally, “Oregon” has been the focus of study at grades 3 and 4 in Oregon schools as an extension of the “expanding horizons” organizational structure of instruction. In the standards adopted in 2011, the study of Oregon is not limited to just elementary school. The 2011 standards make clear that there are important content and skills within Oregon Studies that are developmentally inappropriate for elementary and middle school students and that must be addressed at high school.

The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Historical Society are both committed to providing support to teachers and their students in acquiring the knowledge and skills included within Oregon Studies.

## **LEGISLATION**

SB 739 requires the possible review and revision of the standards adopted in 2011 and the development of classroom materials with consultation with the Oregon Historical Society, the Commission on Black Affairs, the Commission in Indian Services, and the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs.

## **Fiscal Impact**

The bill provides no funding to the Oregon Department of Education for this work. The bill allows the Oregon Historical Society to raise funds for the work, but no appropriation of funds is made. Budget cuts made since 2003 have left the Department of Education without resources for this work. The Education Specialist assigned to Social Sciences Curriculum development is limited to .2 FTE for this state General Fund work. The Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, where Curriculum work is housed, is 97% federally funded. Federal funds can only be used for specific activities related to the federal programs. The bill carries a significant fiscal impact to the Oregon Department of Education in order to fulfill the bill’s requirements.

Local schools and districts are required by SB 739 to ensure that teachers be prepared to use the new materials and strategies in their instruction starting in 2014-2015. This training is generally accomplished by providing release time for professional development and curriculum implementation time. The bill provides no funding for schools and districts to provide preparation for teachers.

Currently, development of instructional materials is the responsibility of the districts. ORS 329.045 gives the State Board of Education the authority to adopt the academic content standards, but decisions about instruction, curriculum, and materials are a function of the local school district..

The bill will require ODE to hold meetings, develop materials, and post on-line professional development and instructional resources.

The fiscal impact for the Oregon Department of Education of SB 739 will be \$146,167.00.