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AAUW-Oregon opposes SB 500. While we support education for all, we feel that creating tax credits for educational expenses or contributions to a “qualified scholarship granting organization” is not the way to improve Oregon’s free elementary and secondary public education system.

This bill would provide a tax credit for educational expenses or contributions to the qualified scholarship granting organization for K-12 education.

At a time when law makers are still struggling to fill the gaps created by the recession, this bill undermines the ability of the state to provide for educating our children who remain in the publically funded educational facilities.

Oregon dollars should not be spent on tax credits for K-12 education at the expense of our already fragile system. This bill allows for private tutors, private schools as well as home schooling expenses.

AAUW believes a strong, free public education system is the foundation of a democratic society and has long opposed diverting public funds to private or religious elementary and secondary schools or other educational expenses. The 1937 AAUW legislative program called for “free public instruction of high quality available to all, since popular education is the basis for freedom and justice.” In 1955 AAUW stated “universal education is basic to the preservation of our form of government and to the well-being of our society.”

AAUW’s current public policy program clearly states AAUW’s “opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education and to charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards as required of other public schools.”

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