

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Savannah Loberger. I am a senior at Hillsboro High School. I was the only student on the STEM task force. This bill is tremendously important to the future of Oregon and our students. Offering a grant process is a great idea and follows the CTE revitalization model from the last session.

The goal of doubling the number of STEM post-secondary graduates is admirable. To do this we need to increase the number of students choosing post-secondary STEM four to six fold.

How do kids choose their degree? How did I choose biomedical engineering and computer science? Because of coaches, mentors, and afterschool time where I have worked with professionals in industry while solving problems, and have gained the ability to speak with adults, I have experiences building and creating new robots that work. Because of coaching I have confidence in myself to become an engineer. Just in FTC robotics each team member put in over 200 hours of hands on experiences after school. Unfortunately not everyone has that chance. A semester course is 72 hours and in a crowded classroom there is no opportunity for 45 kids to get their hands on a robot. And so many schools have no after school program.

United States high schools create the best Quarterbacks and Linemen. We have world superiority in this area of working with students. What is the secret to such phenomenal success with kids while STEM in the US is behind so many other countries? Sports have survived decades and numerous budget cuts. Ask yourself: "Why are sports so successful with kids?" Coaching and individual attention.

What would our sports programs look like if there were no paid coaches, no paid officials for the games, no paid Athletic Directors at the high schools? Would we have the extensive network of sports facilities that every community needs?

Students and parents see where they get coaching and individual attention. Students can easily find coaches who will help them in sports, band, drama, cheerleading. Schools pay coaches in those positions. STEM fields and companies are competing for the best kids from a system that does not honor kids in STEM with coaching. The current lack of paid STEM coaches has sent a very clear message to all of us that STEM is not as important as other opportunities for students.

Einstein said you cannot solve a problem with the same thinking that got you into the problem. It is past time to level the playing field. Now is the time to offer STEM students coaching just like all the other opportunities students have to excel. To show their parents, teachers, and other students what they can do.

At least 10-20% of the money in this bill needs to go to providing STEM coaching directly to students in things like FIRST robotics, Science Fairs, and Computer Science related contests. These programs facilitate problem solving and real world experiences that cannot exist without adult guidance and cannot be learned from a textbook. Students involved in science, technology, engineering, and, math need coaching and mentoring just as much as athletes, musicians, and thespians.

A combination of in class and out of school experiences creates success; you need us kids to be engaged through projects and coaching. Our success comes when there is a long term investment put into STEM from kids themselves. We succeed when adults mentor us, when adults coach us, when adults invest in us. *Then* more of us will choose STEM degrees.