



**Testimony of Becky Straus, Legislative Director
In Support of SB 567
Senate Education Committee
February 28, 2013**

Chair Hass and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of SB 567. The bill is, in many ways, a common sense proposal to address protection of student privacy amidst a complex web of information collected, technology to store it, and laws regulating it. Thank you for your consideration of this bill and your attention to this important issue.

In regard to almost all privacy issues, but particularly in the context of student records, it is important to recognize the distinction between personally identifiable information about students – such as identifiable records of student grades, discipline and other personal and private information – and nonidentifiable information. We do not oppose general collection of information about students when it is nonidentifiable. The collection of aggregate information on students is, in fact, a critical tool for civil rights enforcement and in assuring that every student receives equal access to a high quality education. We are highly concerned about the collection, retention, and sharing of personal and private identifiable information.

The privacy implications of sharing personally identifiable information about students are two-fold: educational records are very detailed and sensitive, and increased access to records inevitably leads to increased risk of data breaches and data loss. These are issues that should be of concern to every student and every parent across Oregon.

SB 567 is a great first step toward better addressing protection of student records in Oregon. Navigating the landscape of the federal privacy rules and data collection mandates, along with the state education governance structures, is more than a full-time job. It is time for Oregon to make a commitment to the privacy of student records by institutionalizing a check on large-scale collection of personally identifiable information.

We urge swift passage of SB 567 to the Ways & Means Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to show our support. Please feel free to be in touch at any time with questions.