



**Testimony of Becky Straus, Legislative Director
In Support of HB 2192
House Committee on Education
March 1, 2013**

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 2192, which promotes behavior and discipline practices in schools that focus on keeping students safe and keep students learning.

The school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) refers to the policies and practices that push students –especially youth of color – out of schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. In our view, students are funneled into the STPP primarily by a zero-tolerance approach to discipline, characterized by inflexible and excessive use of punitive disciplinary measures (like suspension and expulsion) by schools.

In 2010 we published an Oregon School to Prison Pipeline report¹, which examined data around discipline in Oregon schools. We learned that, while African American youth represented just 2.94% of the student population, they represented 6.13% of all students disciplined. For the Hispanic or Latino population, though they represented 17.18% of the total student population, 19.73% of those suspended outside of school were Latino and 21% of those suspended in school were Latino. For Native American students, who represented 2% of the total student population in Oregon, their share of suspensions outside of school was 3.17% and 3.2% of those suspended in school. The trend is similar in regard to percentage of students removed from school to alternative education settings and dropout rates from school.

Smart discipline policies are an important civil rights issue not just because of the disparate impact of the STPP on students of color, but because behavior and discipline policies that keep students in school promote communities that prioritize learning and safety over criminalization of school children.

We urge your support of HB 2192 – an important bill to for student achievement across the state. Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to be in touch at any time with questions or comments.

¹ http://aclu-or.org/sites/default/files/ACLU_STPP_FINAL_0.pdf