

TO: Oregon House Committee on Education

FROM: Andrew Beach, Beaverton Resident

RE: Testimony in FAVOR of HB 2655

Chair Doherty, members of the House committee on education:

HB 2655 provides parents like me an opportunity to restore control of the education of my 3 children. Two of my children are in elementary school and one is in Community College, and I myself am a product of Oregon governmental education. As a consumer of the governmental education system, it's become increasingly apparent that education is becoming a centralized system supported by, and for the benefit of, special interests rather than parents and teachers. This bill provides some key supports for parents and teachers in the form of choice to be excused from the Smarter Balanced and like tests that only serve to profit testing companies and educational service providers and as a summative, end of the school year assessment provides no input to teachers to inform instructional changes/improvements to my children. I can walk into the classroom of any of my kids' teachers and they can immediately tell me what reading level they are, where they are proficient in math, and what topics/areas that we need to work on moving forward. The Smarter Balanced testing drives a wedge between parents, teachers and students, the 3 MOST important parties in public education. Instead, let's allow the teachers and parents to decide what assessments are necessary to monitor our kids' progress.

Another issue that his bill provides a solution is to allow the school district to provide information and guidance on how to be excused from the Smarter Balanced and similar assessments like OAKS. I would take this a step further and suggest that the testing should be an OPT-IN program, meaning that only those parents that give written authorization to test will be tested. Right now, it's the other way around as parents feel at the whim of the district and Oregon Dept of Education policy to justify their exemption from the testing. In this matter, the state should not penalize or in other ways withhold funding for schools that chose to not participate in the assessments nor the communication by the school district of this process and let the parents decide without retribution.

On top of these two issues is the grand tamale and that is privacy of education records. It was under NCLB that the Oregon Dept of Education started tracking our children's data. There was no way to opt out or even get copies of these documents to see what is collected and who is using it. The NSA has built a monstrous data center in Utah to collect this information, and similar systems will be required to house our kids' data. Let us put a defunding and shuttering of project ALDER which is Oregon's longitudinal data system. Every day we see the hacking of computer systems that leaves all of us vulnerable and better to NOT have the data then try to protect the data from hacking. We don't know who and how this data is being used and the laws are too relaxed to provide security.

- (1) Enclosure: Project ALDER data map, sharing of private data with non-educators and private interests without notification to parents. http://alder.orvsd.org/sites/alder.orvsd.org/files/Primary_Data_Stores_Map.pdf

Respectfully yours,

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Primary Data Stores

