

Testimony to the House Education Committee April 4, 2015

Chair Doherty, Vice chairs Frederick and Sprenger and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Randy Hitz, Dean of the Graduate School of Education addressing you today on my own behalf. Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony in strong opposition to HB 3339.

First, you should know a bit about my interest in this bill. I have been a professional educator for over 40 years and a dean of education for 24 years. I have dedicated my life to advancing the teaching profession and have been very active in matters related to national accreditation and state licensure. I have served for 11 years on licensing boards in two different states and I am currently on the Board of Directors of our national accrediting body, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Oregon has the oldest education professional licensing board in the nation and that is a great source of pride for the state and a source of envy for many other states. All mature professions have professional licensing boards whose membership is made up primarily of professionals in that field. Policy makers have this arrangement with professions because they recognize that members of a profession possess a unique knowledge and are the people best equipped to determine who may be part of the profession. Decades ago Oregon policy makers decided to show the same respect to educators that they do to professionals in other fields and the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission was created.

I understand the frustration people have about the operation of TSPC. Everybody loves to hate regulatory agencies and TSPC has had budget challenges in recent years that have made it difficult for them to keep up with their routine work. I have personally experienced the frustrations. However, the problems have nothing to do with the governance of TSPC or with the competence of the staff. Changing the governance will most certainly NOT make things better. To the contrary, HB 3339 will place teacher licensure in an already overburdened department with many other priorities. More importantly it will place responsibility for licensure in the hands of the State Board of Education rather than in the hands of education professionals. That would be a huge step backward for the education profession in Oregon.

Instead of making this mistake, let's give TSPC the resources they need to do their work and let's allow the education profession to function like every other major profession and retain control of its licensure.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.