

Chair Doherty, Vice Chair Hernandez, Vice Chair Wilson--thank you for giving me the chance to testify in support of HB 2845. I join over twenty organizations in voicing my support for Ethnic Studies.

My name is Patricia Sakurai. I am professor who has taught ethnic studies at OSU for over 20 years, and I have witnessed first-hand the positive impact of ethnic studies.

For students who come from communities underrepresented on campus and in curriculum, seeing their histories and perspectives included in course material can often be an empowering experience and help foster a sense of inclusion in academic life—an important factor in student retention and academic success. Emerging research confirms such an impact in earlier education as well. A Stanford study released last year tracked the 4-year progress of over 1400 students in San Francisco who came into high school with less than a 2.0 GPA. Its findings: Those who took ethnic studies saw improvements of 21 percent in attendance, 1.4 GPA points, and earned an additional 23 credits when compared to their counterparts who did not take ethnic studies.

Moreover, ethnic studies is a fundamental component of basic education for all students, regardless of background. Ethnic studies helps students achieve a more well-rounded world view and better understanding of the diverse society in which they live. I have often heard students voice their frustration that they were not exposed to such curriculum earlier in their educations.

Finally, ethnic studies is a vital means of helping students hone their critical thinking skills as they are asked to consider multiple perspectives and complicated social dynamics. I believe this positive impact can translate well in age-appropriate ways as I am currently chairing an honors thesis for a student developing a board game to teach critical aspects of ethnic studies to middle school students and serving on the committee of another who is writing a Nepali American children's book.

While I am not authorized to speak for my university, I can speak as an educator in ethnic studies in my support for HB 2845 as means of enriching the educational experience and achieving more equitable educational outcomes for all of Oregon's K-12 students.

My sincere thanks for your time and consideration.