



To: House Committee on Education

From: Margaret Tallmadge, Environmental Justice Manager, The Coalition of Communities of Color

Date: March 20, 2017

Re: Support for House Bill 2693

Dear Chair Doherty and Committee Members:

The Coalition of Communities of Color supports House Bill 2693, which would establish a program under which Department of Education awards grants to school districts for percentage of certain student transportation costs.

Formed in 2001, the Coalition of Communities of Color is an alliance of 19 culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from six communities of color: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic.

We are a diverse coalition of community leaders, organizers, direct service providers, and racial justice advocates that represent a broad cross section of communities in Oregon who have been underserved by the state's political representation, investments, and basic services. Transportation accessibility and affordability frequently rise to our communities' top priorities.

We know youth passes help high-school-aged youth get to and from school and meet all their other needs, such as extracurriculars and employment, through better access to transit and other transportation options. School districts can apply for grant funding to subsidize youth transit passes and/or increase transportation services to meet student needs.

In families that already face barriers in housing, educational attainment, economic stability and employment, a youth pass can help alleviate staggering expenses and increase pathways out of poverty, including education. Students who don't have alternative transportation options are often limited because they don't have another way to get around. They miss out on sports, tutoring, or other extracurricular activities; can't get to crucial after-school jobs; struggle to connect to health and social services; or suffer from chronic tardiness or absenteeism. Increased transportation mobility is an answer to access, and independence.

The Coalition of Communities of Color urges you to support HB 2693: Youth Transportation Initiative so all our students have an opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Please contact [maggie@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org](mailto:maggie@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org) if you have any questions.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Tallmadge".

Margaret Tallmadge  
Environmental Justice Manager  
Coalition of Communities of Color

