



Native American Youth and Family Center

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March 21, 2017

Representative Margaret Doherty
Chair, House Committee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Native American Youth & Family Center, I respectfully urge your support for House Bill 2693. This establishes a much-needed program under which Department of Education will award grants to school districts for a percentage of certain student transportation costs. This initiative offers multiple benefits by helping high-school-aged youth get to and from school and meet all their other needs, such as extracurricular activities and employment, through better access to transit.

Yellow school buses get students to and from school, but students who don't have transportation options often miss out on sports, tutoring, and other extracurricular activities. They can't get to crucial after-school jobs and they struggle to connect to health and social services. Oregon Department of Education reports that more than one quarter of Oregon's Native American students experience chronic tardiness or absenteeism. This program will contribute to alleviation of barriers to student success and, ultimately, the well-being of our entire state for future generations.

As an organization committed to environmental justice, we are excited about how this program will foster an appreciation of transit at an early age. The State of Oregon's study on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through 2010 indicates that transportation remains the largest contributor to Oregon's in-state greenhouse gas emissions. This will build our future generations of transit riders. It will improve air quality and reduce pollution, resulting in a healthier Oregon for all.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions.

Respectfully,

Baptist P. Lumley
Executive Director

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