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Former Oklahoma State Senator (2012-14)
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Dear Oregon Senate Education Committee,

It has come to my attention that the Oregon Senate Education Committee has granted an Informational Hearing for the Oregon Education Savings Account Bill, SB 437. I would like to offer this letter of support for this extraordinary piece of legislation. I offer my support because I know that access to a quality education can be transformative for some of your most vulnerable constituents.

As a former member of the Oklahoma State House and Oklahoma State Senate; I witnessed first-hand how legislation focused on educational choice improved Oklahoma's educational system. Without question, this legislation empowers parents. I strongly believe that when parents have a seat at the table regarding their child's educational experience; it improves educational outcomes for some of our most challenged students. Furthermore, SB 437 would represent school choice at the highest level, creating a plethora of ways parents and students could access quality education.

Furthermore, the Oregon Education Savings Account would improve the overall public education system. In this country, our common education system continues to lag when compared to schools around the world. However, our higher education system continues to be the leading system in the world. I believe the higher education system has improved because it isn't overly regulated and the system encourages competition. I think this legislation will bring the kind of competition that can improve schools for all students in the state of Oregon.

Lastly, I represented legislative districts in Oklahoma that were the highest in poverty and contained the lowest performing schools. I truly believe if we are going to see racial and economic barriers broken in this country; it will require a commitment to ensure that all students have access to a quality education regardless of their zip code. In the 21st century, Oregon can't afford to ignore the power of school choice to improve economic and educational prosperity for all Oregonians.

Therefore, I urge you to support the Oregon Educational Savings Account. As a former legislator, I know that you are committed to innovation. Toward that end, I can think of no other legislation that match this opportunity to achieve educational excellence. Therefore, I respectfully request that you review and ultimately support SB 437.

Sincerely,

Former State Senator Jabar Shumate

