

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee,

As advisors to the YMCA Youth and Government program, we wish to lend our support to HB 2691. Every year, we convene at the capitol to watch our students engage in the political process by holding elections, participating in committee sessions, and writing, working, and voting on legislation. Our students value their experiences in Youth and Government, and leave with a broad set of skills that are becoming increasingly vital to sustaining our political systems.

The need for civic literacy is greater than ever. In the wake of high-stakes testing, schools have deemphasized social studies compared to other subject areas, resulting in a sharp decline in civics knowledge and literacy. Research suggests that a deficiency in civic knowledge and literacy directly correlates with a decline in civic participation. For a democracy to function properly, its citizens must engage, and we feel that emphasizing civics in school is the best cure for an apathetic citizenry.

We believe the Youth and Government program is a great program to increase civic engagement, but we only reach a fraction of Oregon's high school students. Creating a civic proficiency requirement for graduation would motivate more civic engagement and broaden participation. We urge you to join us in supporting HB 2691.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. J. ...", written in a cursive style.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Nicole Ba", written in a cursive style.