

Chair Doherty and Members of the House Committee:

I am writing to ask that you oppose HB2318 that would ban statewide and district mandated commercially developed assessments for children between pre-K and second grade. Like many supporters of the bill, I am against assessments for young children that are not developmentally appropriate, and that do not inform teaching and learning for young children. However, an outright ban on all assessments “throws out the baby with the bathwater” if you will, and would prohibit the use of valid and reliable assessments that assist in understanding students’ current knowledge and related needs, as well as assist teachers in developing individualized programs for children, based on the children's current knowledge and skills. For example, the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment (OKA) allows for district personnel and policy makers to better understand inequalities that exist across districts for young children and families, and to better target resources to remedy these inequities. The OKA has also highlighted the importance of self-regulation and social emotional competence skills for early learning and school success, and will assist district personnel in directing resources towards improving these important early skills in young children that are the foundation of later academic success.

I urge your committee to oppose this bill and instead to allocate resources to school districts and researchers so that personnel may further study statewide assessments, improve testing approaches and strategies, and improve educational policies and practices for our youngest and most vulnerable students. Assessments can certainly be improved but only through collecting empirical evidence, iterative development, and on going research to document benefits and weaknesses in the assessments.

I write as a concerned early childhood educator committed to high quality public education that serves all children and families, and not as a representative of the University of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jane Squires, Ph.D.

Professor

Center on Human Development

University of Oregon

901 E 18th Ave., Suite 351

Eugene, OR 97403-5253

Ph: 541-346-2634