

**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on General Government
Hearing on SB5502**

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I urge this committee to vote **for** the full funding proposed in the Governor's Budget, SB 5502 for Classroom Law Project.

Introduction

My name is Lane Duckett. I am captain of my school's mock trial team, I do outreach for that program to the underclassmen as well, I also participated in constitutional law or We the People Team this year. I'm here to try to convince you to fund the Classroom Law Project because what they do is so special that every school in Oregon should be able to participate.

You might be wondering: why this program? What makes an organization like CLP that teaches kids about government so important? Well, it's because at most schools, sports are given priority even though the vast majority of students doesn't participate in sports. When I was a freshman, I was a varsity rower until I injured myself so severely that I could no longer do any sport or physical activity, I struggled to walk on my bad days and I fell into the worst depression of my life. I felt like my life was over because I was so physically limited by my pain. I felt I had no control over my body and no worth because I couldn't use it like everyone else. Though I may look now like an able-bodied person, for three long years I struggled every day just to get out of bed. I isolated myself in that time because I didn't know who I was without rowing. I didn't know how to function when I wasn't on a team, when I couldn't play soccer with my friends or go on hikes.

This constant pain plagued my life until one day in sophomore history, kids from the mock trial team came to talk about what they did. After that day, I can truly and honestly say that my life has never been the same. I found my purpose, my passion and my people. I can say now with confidence that I would not be here without the classroom law project. I went from this isolated, broken and hurting person to someone with purpose, drive and confidence, for that I am so grateful to the wonderful people that organize these events.

Today I've been talking a lot about me. But the thing is, this isn't about me. It's about people just like me, all over Oregon. People who feel out of place, people who don't fit into the mold of the high school athlete. Some of the brightest, most driven kids I have ever seen are the ones who had to buy

their clothes from goodwill, fundraise just for the bus to take them three hours or more to competitions.

So I ask you, why is it that only the well-off schools in Portland get the opportunity to be recognized for their hard work, get to be active and contributing to a greater discussion of government, get to be educated on relevant and pressing issues? Because the only program that teaches it doesn't have the reach. I ask you, who do you want carrying your legacy? Do you want people who are educated, passionate, relentlessly driven, do you want people like me? If you want people like me to care, to take this country in an upward trajectory then you must fund the Classroom Law Project. There are thousands of kids just like me waiting for the golden opportunity to be a part of something bigger.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my story and the importance I believe that Classroom Law Project plays for civic education in Oregon, and how it's impacted my life. I strongly urge you to vote for the full funding of CLP in SB5502 so that kids around the state get the same opportunities I've had to understand how truly important it is to participate in our democracy.