

MARK HASS
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 14



COMMITTEES:
Finance and Revenue, Chair
Education
Business and General Government
Conduct
Joint Student Success
Joint Tax Credits

OREGON STATE SENATE

Chair Wagner and Committee,

For the record, I am Sen. Mark Hass, representing Beaverton and Aloha in Washington County. I am testifying in support of SB 456. It prohibits public schools in Oregon from requiring students to pass an exam to receive a high school diploma.

Oregon has required high school graduates to pass an exam to receive their diplomas since 2012.

These exams only serve to harm students who fail them. The exams do not produce any claimed benefits for those who pass. There is no evidence that students who pass these tests are more likely to exceed in college or in their careers.

In fact, recent studies show that a student's high school GPA is a stronger predictor of first-year college performance than the 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment. Those studies also show that reliance on exit exams, even pseudo exit exams, is tied to higher high school dropout rates.

I believe this is because students that fail these tests report feeling defeated. They also report feeling unmotivated to retake the test, work on performance-based assessments, or even continue high school. Essentially, they do not see a point and decide to drop out of school all together.

And we know, those who do not pass and do not receive a diploma will earn a lot less over their lifetimes. These are students who have passing high school GPAs and have completed all other high school requirements, and yet, they will not graduate.

By eliminating Oregon's pseudo exit exam, there will be one less barrier to graduation, and more of Oregon's students will graduate. Just as they do in states like Arizona, Colorado and Minnesota - to name a few.

SB 456 also directs school districts to retroactively award high school diplomas to those who ask, so it has the potential to undo years of harm.

I urge a "do pass" recommendation to the Floor of the Oregon State Senate. Thank you.