



Testimony on House Bill 2941
House Education Committee
March 20, 2019

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and members of the Committee. My name is Kyle Thomas and I am the Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2941.

In 2015, The Educator Equity Act (HB 3375) required Oregon's six public institutions with educator preparation programs to, on a biennial basis, prepare written plans that detail the recruitment, selection, retention, and graduation of diverse educators across the state. The bill in front of the committee would apply the same standards to public and private mental health provider preparation programs in Oregon.

Currently, the HECC reviews the plans for adequacy and feasibility with the governing board of each public university with a teacher education program and, after necessary revisions are made, approves the plans. The HECC also provides guidance to universities on the process for review, revision and approval by institutions and HECC. The work deepens HECCs coordinating and collaboration work around the topics of diversity and equity.

In implementing HB 3375, HECC benefited from established relationships and lines of communication between deans of education programs and the Chief Education Office. The lines existed due to prior convenings by the Oregon University System which regularly brought together public educator preparation programs from across the state.

There is no analogous ongoing work with mental health provider training programs. As a result, this bill would require additional staff time dedicated to establishing relationships and working out reporting processes with these programs in a way that was not required with the establishment of the Educator Equity Act.

Thank you for your time today.