

Testimony in favor of HB 3391

April 2, 2019

Chair Representative Doherty and members of the committee,

As a high school student I was involved in FFA for all four years. The experience of the contests, the leadership skill development and the comradery of my fellow members was very enriching and tremendously helpful in preparing me for adulthood. Our FFA advisor was a key person in the experience as he helped provide the guidance and encouragement that we needed to pursue the opportunities of competitions and club activities.

I want to speak specifically about the critical need for advisors for CTSO (Career Technical Student Organization) leadership. The importance of an engaged and energetic advisor cannot be understated. For an advisor to spend the hours needed to support students in significant competitive endeavors it takes serious time commitments. The importance of recruitment and training for advisors is mission critical. For a robust and consistent program to occur it is extremely important for advisors to receive an additional stipend for their time.

Schools have an internal economy. The salaries for teachers are set via a contract and that contract also specifies a list of extra duty stipends. The importance of a program is verified by the extra duty stipend schedule. Very often the stipends for sports and other activities are significantly greater than stipends for CTSO advisors. This communicates a clear value system to the teaching staff. The importance of CTSOs in student development is undisputed, but the position in the high school economy is often undervalued.

As our economy has changed, our schools have had opportunities to develop programs consistent with new adult economic opportunities. One of those areas is the surge in desire to promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) learning. I believe the lack of stipends for advisors for Science Fairs, Robotics Teams, Programming contests, etc. has stunted the growth opportunities for students in these areas. In fact, not all of these have an associated CTSO as many of these programs are new and developing. Stronger support of CTSOs would encourage the development of new CTSOs to compliment economic development.

For several years I tried to recruit CTE/STEM teachers to become advisors for student groups in Robotics and Computer Science. In several cases the teachers were already earning stipends for coaching sports activities. The teachers asked about a stipend to lead a CTE/STEM activity and when I replied that there was no stipend they declined the opportunity. They asked, "Why would I give up a stipend to coach a sport when there is no stipend for this CTE/STEM opportunity?"

In an ideal world districts would have used some of their Measure 98 money to bring stipends for CTSOs into comparable levels with other Sports and Activities stipends. Apparently we need

legislation to help correct this lack of equity. In the meantime it is clear to many teachers that CTSO stipends are significantly lagging other stipends for the amount of time invested. I do not believe that this is the message we should be sending.

I support strengthening all CTSOs and especially honoring an adult champion to advise the students with an equitable stipend to the stipends in Sports and Activities. A great CTSO experience can significantly contribute to the process of a student maturing into living wage employment.

Don Domes

Licensed Tax Consultant

Technology Champion and Retired CTE Instructor

Hillsboro, Oregon