

**Kate Brown**  
Governor



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House Committee on Rules  
Testimony on potential amendments to HB 2824  
April 10, 2019, 3 pm, Hearing Room C

Chair Representative Holvey, Vice-Chairs House Democratic Leader Williamson, and House Republican Leader Wilson, and Representatives Boles, Nosse, Smith Warner, and Sprenger:

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs), in their roles of advocates for women, girls, and communities of color, are excited by the underlying tenets of HB 2824 which establishes the importance of youth voice in policy considerations for Oregon Government and the mechanism by which Oregon youth, ages 14 – 20, will be engaged in policy work. The Advocacy Commission members and their Chairs and Vice Chairs have been engaged in conversation with the bill sponsors through Representative Helm and the Governor's office over the past several weeks. The shared interest of all regarding HB 2824 is to ensure its ability to define best and sustainable ways to bring youth voices into policy: ways that formally and authentically connect youth statewide around policy considerations with Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branch leaders, while effectively elevating an Oregon civics model for schools and youth "motivated to get involved in their communities and are eager for civic engagement opportunities."

The Chairs and Vice Chairs appreciate the formal role of Boards and Commissions in Oregon and have suggested to Representative Helm and in this testimony that there are alternatives, equally as connected to policy makers, but in more natural settings for students, in their schools as part of civics lessons and regular engagement/class discussion for all. The Commissions know from experience in their communities how compelling this type of local engagement and thought is when working to understand, and identify barriers or propose solutions within policies, whether at the state or local levels. Additionally, the Chairs note that there are existing networks or youth leadership in all parts of Oregon that would also benefit from basing this civic engagement as a learning and advising opportunity as all their members are also students in Oregon schools. The OAC Chairs hope that this would be of special interest to the sponsors of HB 2824 and the Oregon legislature as a whole, to truly lift this idea of engaged, civically minded students as an option in every school as an amendment to this bill.

HB 2824 also establishes the formal way that students meet with legislative and executive branch policy makers through a new board, the Youth Council, with all the associated regular meetings for 39 appointed youth, meetings with policy makers including the Governor and legislators, and providing associated staffing. After the OAC Chairs' discussion with Representative Helm and his staff, all were interested in the opportunity this bill affords to consider other, more sustainable ways for youth to have these discussions with policy makers in real time, having considered their views in discussion with their peers, supported with solid, understandable, policy information being provided by state staff and their related policy advisors. The potential of an annual State Policy Summit with Youth could serve, at less

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cost and with more immediacy and authentic voice of youth statewide, is a powerful option to consider. A conference like this would be the formal time when youth civic leaders or whole groups from civics classes to come to Salem and the Capitol ready with their viewpoints and recommendations, to meet with the Governor's policy staff, and legislative committee chairs. The State Policy Summit with Youth format could include breakout sessions devoted to discussion of specific subjects of concern to the students with policy makers, using an agenda proposed by civics students statewide and organized collaboratively through a way to be suggested by ODE, COSA, LPRO, the Advocacy Commissions, and the Governor's Office. It would also provide the opportunity for the Supreme Court Chief Justice to participate in a break out session with students to hear their justice-related issues, that she and her Justices would staff. This method would allow for regular input and sharing of information from the associated state policy makers to schools, and students offering suggestions to policy makers a regular intervals during the year when key subjects are coming under consideration.

The Chairs thank the bills sponsors, the House Rules Committee members, and the Governor's Office, for their willingness to consider delaying the work session today, in order to explore this or school-related alternatives as a more sustainable mechanism for policy discussions with youth than can be usually afforded in board meetings. We are deeply moved by the interest of the 2019 legislature to include students' voices as an essential way that we grow thoughtful, active citizens. We look forward to being part of the larger collaboration outlined in our testimony, in making real what is right for Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important bill and these potential amendments.

Sincerely,



Dr. Barbara Spencer, OCFW Chair



Jamal Fox, OCBA Chair



Chanpone Sinlapasai-Okamura, OCAPIA Chair



Irma Linda Castillo, OCHA Chair