
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

April 18, 2019

Co-Chairs Roblan and Smith Warner and Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success:

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO) respectfully requests that the committee support the Student Success Act (HB 3427), which would raise at least \$2 billion in revenue per biennia for meaningful investment into our schools. PPAO is the statewide political voice for Planned Parenthood's two Oregon affiliates and for reproductive health care. PPAO defends the Planned Parenthood mission by advocating for public policy that will enhance and protect access to medically accurate, developmentally appropriate sexual health education. Planned Parenthood is the nation's largest provider of sex education, reaching 1.5 million people a year.

As a result of our current tax system, Oregon has been divesting in our schools for decades. Oregon students face some of the largest class sizes in the country and graduate at some of the lowest rates. Due to historical racism and ongoing structural barriers, black and brown students, indigenous students, LGBTQ+ students, low-income students and students with disabilities have suffered the most from this chronic underfunding of K-12 schools. Sustainably funding our schools requires meaningful investments that require out-of-state corporations and moneyed special interests, which pay some of the lowest taxes in the country here in Oregon, to finally step up and pay their fair share.

HB 3427's proposal to raise new revenue must focus on progressivity, adequacy and equity. A corporate activities tax (CAT), with a broad base and a single low rate, would raise significant and much-needed revenue. A CAT is simple to apply, stable, and would be difficult for corporations to dodge or avoid. This destination-based tax would capture the activities of large international corporations doing business in Oregon without disadvantaging Oregon-based businesses. Furthermore, the \$1 million threshold will shield many small businesses from having to pay the tax while the low rate will keep payments down for those businesses that do pay the CAT.

Coupled with the proposed personal income tax reduction and exemptions for groceries, health care, and fuel, the CAT will ensure progressivity—taxing corporations and businesses not Oregon families. The CAT would be an important initial step to remedying Oregon's regressive tax structure in which the lowest-income taxpayers pay more in taxes as a share of income than any group of taxpayers in the state.¹ By asking corporations to pay their fair share, we can start to adequately fund our education system, begin to address an array of historic inequities, and give all students the tools they need to succeed in today's economy. The game-changing investments that would be generated by a CAT would result in unprecedented investments in Oregon students, including targeted investments for students living in poverty, into equity initiatives, such as the Latino, Native, and Black Student Success Plans, and into culturally-specific programming.

¹ <https://www.ocpp.org/2018/11/02/oregon-regressive-tax-structure/>

PPAO believes that student success is predicated on a nexus of factors, which includes youth's ability to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives. Sex education develops those social-emotional skills; teaches youth how to advocate for and protect their bodily autonomy; and cultivates the knowledge and vocabulary necessary for positive health outcomes.

The current crisis in our classrooms has compromised our schools' ability to provide students with the sex education, healthy relationships training and child abuse prevention mandated by Oregon law. The Oregon Health Authority recently surveyed school districts regarding their sex education policies and curricula. Only 35 school districts reported having the required plan of instruction, while 162 districts either did not reply or did not have a plan of instruction.² Across all the districts that replied to the survey, the top barrier to being in compliance with the law was a lack of adequate funding. The other top two barriers that districts identified were lack of curriculum guidance and lack of training.³ All three barriers are related to a lack of adequate funding and resources—a problem we must begin to address.

Access to information, resources and quality health care is a fundamental right and shouldn't depend on who we are or where we live. All young people deserve to have the information they need to make safe and healthy choices. As a result of better access to accurate sex education and affordable birth control, the rate of unintended pregnancy among teens in Oregon has reached a historic low, and more young people are delaying sexual activity and using birth control when they do have sex. Between 1991 and 2015, the national teen birth rate dropped 64%, which resulted in \$4.4 billion in public savings in 2015 alone.⁴ Decreases in teen pregnancy coincide with decreases in high school dropout rates for girls, and improves health outcomes for subsequent generations.

The revenue raised through HB 3427 is a crucial first step to adequately funding our schools. This bill is an opportunity to build a model of public education that is sustainably funded and dedicated to closing measurable gaps for historically underserved students. While none of the \$2 billion in revenue proposed by the bill has been earmarked for sex education, this conversation about revenue and investment is an important starting point for assessing and prioritizing implementation of Oregon's sex education, healthy relationships and child abuse prevention laws.

It's time for a game-changing investment in Oregon schools. It's time to ask a little more of corporations so we can do so much better by Oregon students. We urge the committee to support HB 3427.

Sincerely,

Emily McLain
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

² <https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=4bf3974813d4436793660897cb923311>

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/index.htm>