

March 10, 2021

Senate Committee on Education
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

RE: Educator Support for SB 513

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Oregon educators strongly support SB 513, the Civics Education Act.

As educators, we care deeply about our students and take seriously our role in helping provide the knowledge and essential skills they will need to realize their potential as successful and productive members of our society. An Oregon education must empower students to be well-informed, active members of their communities and provide a meaningful opportunity to participate in our democracy to make positive changes to the world around us.

However, we are not effectively providing those tools to our youth currently:

- Only 25% of Americans can name all three branches of government; nearly one-third of Americans are unable to name any.
- **Only 24% of high school seniors test at or above a proficiency level in civics.**
- Seventy-five percent of Americans born in the 1930s believed it was essential to live in a democracy. Only about 30% of Americans born in the 1980s believe that today.

While this is a national crisis, it is of particular import in Oregon as we are one of only eleven states that does not currently require a civics education class for graduation. We must do a better job of preparing our youth with the knowledge of the rights and responsibilities we each share in a democracy.

The Civics Education Act is a clear response to these problems. It provides that every Oregon student will receive one semester of civics education before they graduate. The bill does not increase the number of credits that students will need to graduate. It simply ensures that one semester out of the three years of social studies currently required for graduation will be dedicated to learning about our government, our legal system, our democracy – and to understanding their roles, rights, and responsibilities to participate.

The bill also does not require development of new academic content standards as the Oregon Department of Education already provides standards for civics and government education. However, without designated and focused class time, that content is often embedded in other social studies courses meaning teachers are unable to teach civics in-depth. This bill will allow teachers to provide robust, dedicated civics courses that ensure all students receive a strong grounding in the established civic standards, giving them the knowledge and capabilities to effectively engage in their roles as citizens and community members.

This is also an issue of equity. In districts with less funding, civics classes are less likely to be offered, and those students receive instruction on fewer of the Oregon social science standards that directly support robust civics education; teachers must make decisions as to which topics they have space to teach in relevant US history, economics, or other social studies classes. However, even in wealthier districts, civics-based classes are typically elective and not required, so that some students receive an adequate civics education, while many others do not.

This inequity has implications beyond the classroom. Research shows that students who receive quality civics education are more likely to vote, discuss politics at home, complete college, and develop skills that lead to employment. They are also four times more likely to give back to their communities through volunteering and working on community issues and are more confident in their ability to speak publicly and communicate with their elected representatives. We must, therefore, strive to increase civic awareness and competency among ALL Oregon students, and prepare them to actively engage in their responsibilities to our community. A required semester of civics is a critical step toward achieving that goal.

This bill will empower educators to teach in-depth courses on civics that will inspire future generations of engaged and active civic participants. This is a good bill for Oregon education and a critically important bill for the future of our democracy and our civic life. Join educators in supporting the Civics Education Act.

Sincerely,

- A. Tobin Buckley - Education Assistant, Helman Elementary School, Jackson County
1. Adam Gaede - 6th Grade LA / SS teacher, Sellwood Middle, Multnomah County
2. Adriene Oster - Social Studies/Capstone Teacher, Baker Web Academy
3. Aletia Cochran - Teacher, Lake Oswego Junior High, Clackamas County
4. Alison Barros - Lead Guide, The Ivy School, Multnomah County
5. Allison Haight - Social Studies Teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
6. Alyson Battistel - Teacher, Milwaukie High School, Clackamas County
7. Amber Tollerud - Student Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
8. Amy Sabbadini - Teacher, Bend Senior High School, Deschutes County
9. Andre Carvalhaes - Science Teacher, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
10. Anna Escalada York - Social Studies and CTE teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
11. Anne Christmas - Paraeducator, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
12. Annette Noratli - Classroom teacher, Meadow Park Middle, Washington County
13. Barbara Kraft - Teacher, Liberty High School, Washington County
14. Becky Sniffen - Media Assistant, Helman Elementary School, Jackson County
15. Beth Merrill - Social Studies Teacher, Sunset High School, Washington County
16. Bethany Gunnarson - Visual Arts Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
17. Bobbi Sloan - Teacher, Central Christian School, Deschutes County
18. Bradley Miller - Social Studies Teacher, Rex Putnam High School, Clackamas County

19. Brian Johnson - Teacher, Pendleton High School, Umatilla County
20. Brittany Hardy - Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
21. Bryanna Trevino - School Counselor, Ashland High School, Jackson County
22. Cambria Floren Simm - Teacher, Ashland High School, Jackson County
23. Charles Lauer - Teacher, Baker Web Academy, Multnomah County
24. Chris Aden - Teacher, Sandy High School, Clackamas County
25. Chris Lee - Teacher, North Salem High School, Marion & Polk County
26. Courtney Wertz - 7-12 English/Social Studies Teacher, Paisley Middle/High School, Lake County
27. Crystal Briggs - 8th Grade Humanities Teacher, St. Helens Middle School, Columbia County
28. David Grosenbach - Substitute Teacher, Jackson County
29. David Hildebrand - Portland Christian, Multnomah County
30. David Marsh - Teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
31. David Moss - Teacher, International School of Beaverton, Washington County
32. Debbie Fitzpatrick - Technician, Ashland School District, Jackson County
33. Debbie Larsen - Technical Service Coordinator, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
34. Deborah S Bellemore - Social Studies and Math Teacher, Cascade High School, Marion County
35. Debra Dean - Secondary teacher (retired), Kelly Middle School, Lane County
36. Diane Berry - School Counselor, Ashland High School, Jackson County
37. Earlene Camarillo - Assistant Professor of Politics, Western Oregon University, Marion County
38. Ellen Gayton - Teacher, Bellview Elementary School, Jackson County
39. Eric Keller - Educator, Hood River Valley High School, Hood River County
40. Erica Dietz - 8th Grade Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher, Cascade Middle School, Deschutes County
41. Erika Lowe - Educational Assistant, Willow Wind Community Learning Center, Jackson County
42. Fred Trosko - Assistant Principal, Sandy High School, Clackamas County
43. Gail Greaney - Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
44. Gayle Faust - Retired educator, Cal Young Middle, Lane County
45. Greg Garcia - AP US History Teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
46. Greg Parrington - Teacher, Rowe Middle School, Clackamas County
47. Gwen Campbell - 8th grade History, and English Language Arts Teacher, West Sylvan Middle School, Washington County
48. Hillary Hyde - Assistant Professor of Practice/Program Director CYFS, Portland State University, Multnomah County
49. Ivy Elaine Pruettt - Retired teacher, Clear Lake, Lane County
50. Jacqueline Brothers - Teacher, Sprague High School, Marion County
51. James Decker - Educator, EDGE Middle School, Marion County
52. Jami Lyn Weber - English and History Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
53. Janell Cinquini - Teacher, Lakeridge High School, Clackamas County
54. Jeff Kopkin - Social Studies teacher, Alder Creek Middle School, Clackamas County

55. Jeffrey J. Sparks - Teacher, Falcon Heights, Klamath County
56. Jeffrey Mann - Special Education Resource Teacher, Bellview Elementary School, Jackson County
57. Jeffrey Robinson - History Teacher, Riverdale High School, Multnomah County
58. Jennifer Glowacki - 8th-grade Humanities, Highland Park Middle School, Washington County
59. Jenny Brown - Teacher, Pacific Crest Middle School, Deschutes County
60. John Parks - Government Teacher, West Salem High School, Polk County
61. John W. "Jack" Lundeen - Retired, Clackamas County
62. John Weber - Teacher, Tigard High School, Washington County
63. Jon Gottshall - Teacher, Arts & Communication Magnet Academy (ACMA), Washington County
64. Jon Labrousse - Teacher, Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter, Lane County
65. Jon Theiring - Classroom Teacher, Phoenix High School, Jackson County
66. Judy Roumpf - Retired teacher, Laurelhurst, Multnomah County
67. Julia Blattner - Teacher, Cleveland High School, Multnomah County
68. Juliet Prosser - Social Studies Teacher, Athey Creek Middle School, Clackamas County
69. Kacey Anne Dewing - Teacher, St. Mary's School, Jackson County
70. Kaley Hambelton - Social Studies Teacher, Cleveland High School, Multnomah County
71. Karen Olsen - 5th Grade Teacher, McCornack Elementary, Lane County
72. Karoli Cadarette - Teacher, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
73. Kate Moore - ELA/Social Studies Educator, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
74. Katherine Hawks - 4th Grade Teacher, Bohemia Elementary School, Lane County
75. Katherine Holden - Associate Principal, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
76. Kevin Keating - Social Studies Teacher, St. Mary's, Jackson County
77. Kiana Rickman - Teacher, Pendleton High School, Umatilla County
78. Kim Hosford - School psychologist, SOESD/Ashland SD #5, Jackson County
79. Kim Keoppen - Social Studies and Language Arts Teacher, Willow Wind CLC, Jackson County
80. Kristie Bash - Oregon Licensed Teacher K-8, Substitute, Lane County
81. Kyle Yamada - Social Studies Teacher, Eugene International High School, Lane County
82. Laura Fisher - Social Studies Teacher, Roosevelt High School, Multnomah County
83. Laura Petchell - Clackamas Community College, Clackamas County
84. Lisa Chretien - Teacher, Hermiston High School, Umatilla County
85. Lisa March - Head Custodian, Walker Elementary, Jackson County
86. Lisa Robin - Teacher, Phoenix High School, Jackson County
87. Lynda Bell - Special Education Teacher K-5, Bellview Elementary, Jackson County
88. Mara Shlachter - Mock Trial Coach, Lincoln High School, Multnomah County
89. Marianne Wallace - Educational Assistant, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
90. Mark Zimtbaum - Teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
91. Marlene Iversen - Retired teacher, Gilham Elementary, Lane County
92. Matthew Damon-Tollenaere - Teacher, Bellview Elementary, Jackson County
93. Max Schmeling - Bellview Elementary School, Jackson County
94. Michelle Lacaden - Teacher, West Sylvan Middle School, Multnomah County

95. Mira Peterson Adams - 1st grade teacher, Willow Wind Community Learning Center, Jackson County
96. Nathan M. Pier - Cleveland High School, Multnomah County
97. Nora Knox - School Psychologist, Ashland High School, Jackson County
98. Norine Madden – Churchill High School, Lane County
99. Paige Hazard - Gen Ed Social Studies Teacher, Cleveland High School, Multnomah County
100. Paul Patton - Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
101. Peter Kane - MS Social Studies Teacher, Baker Web Academy, Multnomah County
102. Portia Hall Rockne - Social Studies Teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
103. Ray Brown - South Columbia Family School, Columbia County
104. Rebecca Bjornson - Teacher, Ashland High School, Jackson County
105. Rebekah Ann Dunkle - Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
106. Rhonda Gray - Teacher, Franklin High School, Multnomah County
107. Rima Givot - Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
108. Robert Scott Jones - Civics Teacher, Baker Web Academy, Baker County
109. Sadie Adams - Social Studies Teacher, Cleveland High School, Multnomah County
110. Scott Chadick - District Office, Jackson County
111. Scott Jones - Coach, Sam Barlow High School, Multnomah County
112. Sinda Fitz - Retired teacher/Substitute teacher, Sheldon High School, Lane County
113. Sofia Sommer - Education Assistant, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
114. Steve Retzlaff - Principal, Ashland Middle School, Oregon County
115. Stu Clem - Social science teacher, Pendleton High School, Umatilla County
116. Susan Casey - Teacher, Eagle Point High School, Jackson County
117. Susan Hudson - Educational Assistant, Ashland Middle School, Jackson County
118. Susie Seaney - Online Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
119. Thea Hayes - Retired Public School Teacher, Multnomah County
120. Timothy Graham - Teacher, Cleveland, Multnomah County
121. Toni Del Guidice - ParaProfessional, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
122. Tony M Cosby - Teacher, Sisters High School, Deschutes County
123. Travis Eddy - Teacher, The Ivy School, Multnomah County
124. Trig Rogers - Social Studies Teacher, Century High School, Washington County
125. Valerie Shelton - Teacher, Baker Web Academy, Baker County