

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 10, 2021

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Committee on Education
Oregon State Senate
Oregon State Capitol

Ref: SB 513 -1s

Chair Dembrow:

I write this letter in support of Senate Bill 513 with the -1 Amendment. The “Civics Education Act” represents an important step forward for our nation, state, and communities. It requires our schools to prioritize civics education at a time when we need a greater understanding of what government can – and cannot – do. As a career educator, former local government leader, and as a retired USAF Officer, I believe there is nothing more important than people engaging in the decisions that govern our lives. Democracies die when the citizens disengage, and we must not allow this to happen on our collective watch.

Whatever your faith, ideology, party, or perspective may be, we are “in this ship of state” together, and we must understand how to sail it together. Consider the comments of 19th Century Congressman Fisher Ames, “Monarchy is like a sleek craft, it sails along well until some bumbling captain runs it into the rocks. Democracy, on the other hand, is like a raft. It never goes down, but... your feet are always wet.” Our Democracy is taking on water, and our raft needs all hands working in common cause, paddling in the same direction. That cannot happen so long as we ignore the necessity to teach each, every generation how to live, love, and work in peace – the very nature of effective civics education.

SB 513 with the -1 can be the first piece of a larger strategic investment of our talent, time, and treasure in reigniting the “Oregon Way.” I believe the true strength of our state is our people. And when people understand the rules – when people know the dynamics of governance – we make better choices. It is time to move past the era of partisan division and personal destruction.

It is time to seek sound policy instead of reductionist partisan goals. And it is time for the vast majority of us who want guaranteed opportunity, a safe environment, protection of our basic rights, and good stewardship that affords a growing robust Middle Class to have a path forward.

SB 513 with the -1 is not the panacea, but it is the critical link to the Oregon we can become. Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts. I truly appreciate your consideration of this measure.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Evans".