



To: House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
From: Richard Donovan, Legislative Services Specialist
Re: House Bill 2507
Date: February 4, 2021

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Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Kate and Kropf, and members of the committee:

On behalf of OSBA membership, including 197 school districts and 19 Education Service Districts, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2507.

On March 8, 2020, Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 global pandemic. Since that time school districts statewide have been delivering instruction remotely, through comprehensive distance learning. Generally, CDL is delivered online using real-time video conferencing tools. Access to this kind of instruction requires appropriate and reliable high-speed internet home access.

In the midst of this pandemic, some Oregon communities were ravaged by the wildfires of the summer of 2020. During that time, Oregon burned. And some families and students in school districts in these communities lost homes, jobs, incomes, and access to public facilities, including school buildings.

HB 2507 would make modest changes to the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program. OTAP is a program that supports home telephone and internet access to Oregon's most needy by subsidizing costs associated with that access. The bill would extend the sunset on the program from the current 2023 to 2030. It would also make clear that Oregon's OTAP program is not paired with federal programs on the same topic.

During a time of unprecedented upheaval for challenges, HB 2507 would make targeted changes to an existing program with no known opposition. The program benefits some of Oregon's neediest families have access to telephone and internet services that are now, more than ever, crucial to day-to-day life and education.

Thank you for your time. Please support HB 2507.