



Greetings co-chairs, Senator Frederick and Representative McLain, and members of the committee: Senators Dembrow and Thompson, Representatives Alonso Leon, Levy, Reschke and Ruiz. Thank you for your service. My name is Brad King and I'm a Lead Screening Coordinator for the Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation. I'm one of the lucky team members who goes out and conducts school based vision screening events for students all over Oregon. This written testimony comes to you regarding Senate Bill 5513 and in support of the Oregon Department of Education's Student Vision Health Fund.

One day soon, based on current behaviors and opportunities, this pandemic will abate. While we must continue to be careful and our behavior will change ... we will find a new normal. A big part of that new normal will be making sure all of our students in Oregon schools achieve their educational success which will expand their future opportunities. As a part of that we all realize that 80% of K-12 learning is **VISUAL**, yet almost 25% of students have undetected, correctable vision issues. To identify those students in need of vision assistance, like eyeglasses, the Lions of Oregon and the Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation has and will continue to advocate for and provide the highest quality, state-of-the-art, objective, safe and equitable school based vision screening and effective follow-up referral resources for underserved student families.

OLSHF screenings are as equitable as they can be: Based on the Oregon Department of Education's "School Report Card" published in October, 2020, the student population that receives vision screening from OLSHF, and it's racial/ethnic diversity, remarkably matches Oregon's overall student population diversity.

For the past 8 years OLSHF has used the SPOT photo-vision screener. In virtually seconds, the SPOT takes 13 measures of the students eyes, looking for 8 conditions common to young people that negatively affect learning. These screenings take place no closer than a meter from the student. Hundreds of thousands of students have received these screenings since 2013. As a matter of fact, another report from the Oregon Department of Education concerns Oregon's High School Graduation rate over the last 5-6 years. Most of that cadre of graduating students received quality vision screening during their school career and ODE's report shows an 8% increase in graduation. While we cannot take complete credit for that, it is a distinct factor.

From the very beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, OLSHF worked quickly and effectively to establish a safe methodology to continue to provide school vision



screenings, safe for students, school staff and volunteers. This included mounting a SPOT on a dollied tripod with a meter long panning handle in conjunction with all appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. This methodology is CDC and OHA compliant and provides a greater than 6' safe "social" distance between the student and screener. This methodology was "beta" tested during the summer of 2020 and has been in safe and successful use in small, rural school districts throughout Oregon during times when Governor's orders allowed in-class learning.

Even with this new safe distance methodology, screenings remain quick and efficient and they take students out of the classroom learning environment for a very short time, only minutes, minimally impacting the valuable learning day.

Pandemic or no pandemic, as a school nurse friend says: "If Johnny can't see, Johnny can't read. If Johnny can't read, Johnny can't learn."

In addition to my vision screening work, I also help in OLSHF's Development office, raising funds and grant writing and there simply isn't the private funding available to this important task. We must cement this private/public partnership with stable and adequate funding.

Prior to my work at OLSHF, I was a law enforcement professional in Oregon for 30 years and I know that those students who do not achieve success in school are many times more likely to engage in negative behaviors and ultimately effect a greater drain on scarce State resources. Quality vision screening and follow-up care can help many of those students find the educational success they deserve.

Chairman Dembrow, Senator Gorsek and Representative Ruiz, we screen students at a number of private schools in your districts and we work with the Multnomah County Education Service District in efforts with all of the public school students in your districts.

Senator Thompson, I get to screen most of the students all over your district including the Hood River County School District, North Clackamas SD and Oregon Trail SD.

Representative Alonso Leon, we provide screening to all of the K-5 students and more in your district.

Representative Levy, we screen at most of the schools in your district, (one of the La Grande Lions is an optometrist and screens the kids in La Grande!).



Representative Reschke, my partner, Stephen Brewster screens all of the K-5 students in Klamath County and parts of Lake County.

Members of the committee given the appropriate resources we will screen every student in every corner of Oregon with no regard for their socio-economic status, racial/ethnic background, etc. Our "20-20 Vision" is to see that every student in Oregon gets regular vision screening so they can achieve their full educational potential and improve their life potential. Please support senate Bill 5513. Thank you.

Best Regards,

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Here is Lion Dave from the Burns Lions Club screening a student at Henry Slater Elementary in Burns on March 11, 2021.