

Good Afternoon Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Education Committee. For the record, my name is Jonathan Mercado, I am a sophomore at Tualatin High School, and I am a Latinx Student. I am supportive of HB 3363. One of the only times that I have felt seen as a Mexican or Latinx person, is when I watched Coco. I saw my culture, I saw my traditions. I saw the beautiful artwork and heard those amazing songs. I cried, and not because of Mama Coco (well kinda), but also because I felt appreciated. One of the other times that I have felt seen was in Disneyland, for the Dia de los Muertos parade. I watched the dancers dance to Hispanic Music, and Mickey and his friends wearing sombreros. Watching that pass by, I was on the verge of tears. I felt seen, and loved. Now, that was in California. I live here in Oregon. I attend Tualatin HS, a public high school. Never in my education have I felt seen or appreciated when it comes to Latinx culture, or my traditions and values as a Mexican. TuHS is my safe place, and so the fact that I don't really learn much about my history, or see events that resemble things that I do at home, is very disheartening. There is no Racial Equity if I work hard in ASB to represent Tualatin, and dance to the best of my ability to earn titles for Tualatin, but I don't even learn my own Mexican history or see events that represent my culture. The Racial Equity and Justice Student Council would be a great way to see change. I am in favor of House Bill 3363 because this council can help amplify BIPOC student voices and hear and act upon the changes that we suggest. Having 70% of the collaborative being part of racial or ethnic groups that are or have been underserved or under represented would be a great way for our voices to get out there. They can help change the education policy in our schools to make it more welcoming and loving for minority students. I'm also in favor of HB 3363 because I know I'm not the only one who has hidden and unappreciated. I bet there are a lot of minority students who can agree with me. Seeing this bill go through will be the first step to seeing a change in the schools to make other students like me feel seen. Thank you.