

Caddy Hanen McKeown
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 9
Coos, Douglas, Lane, and Lincoln Counties



David Brock Smith
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 1
Curry, Coos, Douglas, and Josephine Counties

OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE

August 19, 2020

Kimberly Howard
Chair, State Board of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Howard and members of the board,

We write to you in support of a southern Oregon student's proposal to ban the presence of confederate flags on school grounds in Oregon and are pleased to offer bipartisan backing of this effort to make our schools safer and more welcoming. We believe that symbols of racism; like the confederate flag, have no place on our K-12 public school campuses.

This issue came to our attention when a student shared stories with us of incidents involving the confederate flag and the use of racial slurs in an Oregon school. We ask for your help in eliminating this symbol that foments divisiveness and discrimination among Oregon students.

There is no place for hate and racism within our society, especially in our Oregon Public School System. We believe it is important for our youth to learn the steps we have taken as a nation and society towards equality. Symbols of racism are not conducive to a good learning environment and are uncomfortable for many. In particular, they leave students of color feeling unwelcome and distract all students from the tasks they come to school to do: to learn, to grow, and to work together.

We reach out to you today at the request of a remarkable, young Oregon leader and on behalf of other students coming up in schools around the state. We request your help in addressing this issue once and for all to ban the confederate flag from Oregon Public Schools.

As we are both former longtime school board members, we believe this action would be a positive step forward towards a more equitable and safer learning environment for all of Oregon's youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Caddy McKeown
State Representative
House District 9

David Brock Smith
State Representative
House District 1