

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair, and Oregon Senate Education Committee members

RE: SB 270 pertaining to education opportunities for inmates

In support

February 21, 2023

Senator Dembrow:

Has education been important in your life and made you a better person?

Has your education opened doors in your personal and professional life?

We have a long history in our country of recognizing the importance of mandatory publicly funded primary education and a robust secondary education program. Better education will improve the lives of people when they release from prison and make them more likely to succeed as they reenter society. SB 270 is a step toward creating an entire class of educated and pro-social citizens. It is important to pass this bill.

Inmates currently have access to ABE (Adult Basic Education-equivalent to grade school) and GED (General Educational Development-equivalent to high school). Education beyond high school is very limited, expensive, and generally of low quality. This bill allows inmates to have access to Oregon's high quality community colleges in addition to more advanced programs. Over 95% of current inmates will release to their community. Wouldn't your constituents prefer to have a new neighbor with a bachelors or masters degree and a clear path to a professional job?

I had the privilege of tutoring inmates in prison. I personally witnessed the leap in their self confidence and desire for self betterment during class. While some wished to improve manual skills, those who wanted to pursue intellectual development were stymied after achieving their GED. Wouldn't it be wonderful to help them become professionals in your community?

Education improves the lives of individuals and society. I have seen soaring improvements in inmate's behavior and skills with the most basic

education. I would love to see everyone have access to the education that they need to become productive and well integrated citizens. SB 270 is an important step in that direction. Please vote in favor of SB 270.

Scott Strickland