

Submitter: Erika Leung
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Dear Chair Janeen Sollman and members of the committee,

My name is Erika Leung and I am a junior from Lincoln High School, a part timer worker at the Bobo Tea House, and a volunteer at the LECARE pharmacy. I am testifying in support of SB 854, which would require each school district to develop a written plan establishing climate change instructional programs for k-12 grades by June 1, 2026.

Climate education is important to me because it is the only way we can prepare and empower students to confront our climate reality.

When I was in elementary school my biggest fear was wearing an extra pair of socks, because another pair of socks would mean another cycle in the washing machine, another light in the house on, and another nail in the coffin that ended the world. The idea that climate change was my fault fed into my fears and dominated my mind.

But when the sky turned red in 7th grade from wildfires, and the air became thick and unbreathable, I realized that no amount of minutes I cut down in the shower would fix the climate disasters right in front of me. I believe my school system has failed to educate and empower students like me on the climate events that we had and have to confront for the rest of our lives. No student should feel as helpless, scared, and alone as I did.

This legislation will ensure that students are informed on the greater scientific, economic, and political factors that contribute to climate change. As well as how to meaningfully respond to the negative impacts of climate change by engaging in stewardship activities, policy-making and civic participation.

I urge you to please listen to the voices of youth and prioritize access to equitable climate justice education in our public schools this session and beyond.

Thank you,
Erika Leung