

Submitter: Farren Groom
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Esteemed Senators and to all it my concern,

I am a current Oregon high school senior who is concerned about the lack of climate education that I received in Oregon public schools. Throughout my education I have exclusively learned about environmental issues in my biology and chemistry classes, with little to no emphasis on the impacts of human industry and resource use on climate change. Our school system is responsible for preparing students for life in the real world. Because of this, I urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 854, a bill which would alter our curriculum to include climate education at all levels, allowing students to understand and cope with the climate crisis.

A key reason why Senate Bill 854 will be an improvement is that it mandates education on ways individuals can cause positive change (2e, 2f, 2m) and take care of their mental health (2c) in relation to climate change. For children and adolescents, who have no power to vote and little ability to change their household spending habits, it can be easy to feel powerless in the face of climate change. For me, this powerlessness manifested into guilt over simply existing. I felt that because I was using resources and oxygen to live, and knew of no ways to create positive change, my net impact on the world was negative. Guilt and anxiety surrounding climate change in youth could be countered by curriculums that empower students to create positive change and teach stress-management techniques. Students equipped with the ability to cope with their anxieties and channel them into actual change will be better prepared for the real world. For the health and wellbeing of both our students and environment, please consider voting yes on Senate Bill 854.