

Good Afternoon, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Matea LaFrenz, my pronouns are she/her, and I am a sophomore at Caldera High School in the Bend Lapine school district. I am a student intern with an Oregon student leadership network called Our Future, a statewide network of high school students that are working on climate action and climate justice issues in Oregon.

I'm writing to urge you to support SB 421 because over the past years I've seen the need for racial justice and diverse voices. Historically many stakeholders have been left out of conversations impacting their education, and more so minorities. As a student I believe students should have the ability to shape their futures and serve as collaborative leaders in policy making. This bill would be a step in the right direction of offering a diverse lens and ensuring that our youth have the resources and perspective required for collaboration. This bill would help youth collectively create and implement policies and practices that directly impact their lives.

Establishing a racial equity and justice student council is a necessity. Under no circumstances should students be left out of conversations about our education. It is imperative that our historically, and currently underrepresented or underserved youth are involved in the creation, implementation of policies and practices that have impacted their lives.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I urge you to vote yes on SB 421.