

Submitter: Opal Primozich
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB421

Good afternoon, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the of Senate Education Committee. For the record, my name is Opal Primozich, Student Body President at McMinnville High School and former State President of the Oregon Association of Student Councils.

I am here in earnest support of Senate Bill 421 (the Youth Collaborative Bill) because Oregon needs a system for youth to get involved with policy. And not just any youth, at that—youth who feel voiceless. Youth who ARE voiceless because they have been disproportionately underserved in their educational experiences.

In my time as a student leader, I have learned the importance of representative voice.

In my school district, I am part of a steering committee that looks at data of student and family engagement to support the creation of a long-term outreach plan. Many of these conversations surround the way that BIPOC communities and other focal populations are not seeing the same results as the students that our institutions were built to serve.

I see this in ways that can't be shown on a chart, too. Students are desperate for outlets to share their voices and experiences, especially those who aren't often called on. In the last two years, I have had the privilege of facilitating virtual summits for youth who are looking to be a part of these conversations and provide input on policy goals and what they hope to see change in Oregon schools. I have watched the numbers pour out in support of this work, and the need for a youth collaborative is apparent and dire.

This bill will ensure true representation from EVERY area. Every single corner of our state will be heard in this work. SB 421 presents a crucial opportunity to change Oregon's educational landscape and steer it in a more representative direction.

It will always be worth it to invest in Oregon students. We must give the people who need it most a seat at the table.

The youth are ready to rise up and be heard.

Thank you for your time today and the opportunity to testify before you. For the equitable expansion of Oregon's education system, I urge you to vote Yes on SB

421.