

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 15



OREGON STATE SENATE

February 28, 2023

Senate Committee on Education in Support of SB 421

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to lend my testimony in support of Senate Bill 421. I am the Senator from District 15, which includes areas of Western Washington County. As a former school board member in Hillsboro I advocated for years, alongside my fellow board members, to have a student representative providing student voice on our school board, much like Forest Grove School District had already done for years. Happily, the Hillsboro School Board now includes three student members each school year. Students can provide input on issues that concern them directly. Senate Bill 421 would create a youth advisory council, housed within the Oregon Department of Education, to advise and make recommendations to the legislature and the Governor's office. The bill is carefully constructed to provide opportunities for youth who are members of historically marginalized and underrepresented minorities to engage in state-level leadership. It seeks to diminish the possibility of discrimination in choosing members. The bill's emphasis is on the diversity of voices and perspectives, which is crucial in creating a more inclusive and equitable education system.

In Hillsboro we have seen how the Hillsboro Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has accomplished some very impressive work within our community. They volunteer, attend events, collaborate on projects to help improve the work/life balance in Hillsboro for all. They are very much our student ambassadors. They aim to serve and improve the community through positive activities, strengthening relationships, appreciating diversity, and forming more supportive relationships between youth and adults. The impact that that our YAC students are making in our community is very real. Beyond advising our local city council, these students often become engaged community leaders who stay in Washington County and serve our community in the future. They have been given amazing opportunity to grow their skills and show strong potential to become future leaders.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janeen Sollman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Janeen Sollman
Senate District 15