

Submitter: Nora Whalen

On Behalf of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure: SB854

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Nora Whalen, I am a junior at South Eugene High School. I am Vice President of the Youth Pantry club and a member of the Earth Guardians 350 club at my school. I am also part of South Eugene's Gender Diverse Ultimate Frisbee team.

As an active community member and someone who has a great love for the outdoors, I support SB 854. This bill would require age-appropriate climate education programs for K-12 schools. The prioritization of this bill would benefit students like me by learning about the environment that we live in.

As a student and as an athlete I can recall how climate change has affected me personally as well as many of my peers. This fall, I was impacted by the smoke from wildfires in Oregon. There have been many times when my sports practice was canceled due to the extremely unhealthy air quality from the smoke. These unhealthy conditions have been affecting me as an athlete and as a student. Back in 2020, when all outdoor activities were prohibited, and it was too dangerous to leave our houses. During this time I was only 14 years old. I should not have had to fear for my safety, or fear that my beloved town, where I've grown up my whole life, would burn away. When I think about the future, I worry about how climate change will continue to affect me and those around me.

Having climate education can help take away from this stress, and help teach students about our environment. Learning about how climate change will affect us, and how we can continue to combat this issue, will only help students understand what is happening around us. I would

like to continue to help preserve our Earth, starting with my local community. Having knowledge and resources at my disposal will help me further enact positive change. Students in Oregon need to learn about climate change. Bill SB 854 is a great way to teach students about climate change and reduce the stress and/or fear around the climate crisis. Understanding the changes we face in Oregon, and around the world is critical to the development of education and the people that we grow into. I urge you to vote yes on SB 854.

Kind regards,

Nora Whalen