

Dear Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 854. My name is Kai Schrosk, and I am writing this testimony on behalf of the Climate Justice League. We are a student organization at the University of Oregon, where we strive to educate and empower students in all matters of climate justice. Personally, I am a journalism and anthropology undergraduate with a focus in science communication.

The Climate Justice League strongly supports SB 854. We see immense value in the expansion and integration of climate change instruction across all K-12 core subject areas that this bill seeks to implement.

Every day we see the tragedy of climate change play out around the world. Locally, we have many members who have been impacted by flooding, wildfires, drought and smoke. One thing all our members, and in fact every student in Oregon K-12 and beyond, have in common is that the world that we are living in is already shrouded with ecological disasters and the devastating effects of climate change. Climate change has, and will continue to, impact our everyday lives in complex ways. Children deserve to learn about the world they are living in and have access to tools to navigate that reality. Our schools should be a place of honesty and empowerment through knowledge.

Even though Climate Justice League is based at the University of Oregon, a school that prides itself in environmental studies and science programs, we often encounter college students with a lack of basic climate knowledge or with an understanding that is steeped in misinformation. Climate change education can help combat misinformation that students encounter both online and in their communities. Furthermore, this education can provide students with a connection to the natural world around them and pathways to further education and careers that help to protect that world. Climate change is more than an issue for science class. It impacts every aspect of life from history to health. Students deserve to be taught how to navigate those impacts. Right now, teaching students about climate change is a personal choice for many teachers. Students do not get the personal choice to opt out of the damaging effects of climate change.

Members of this committee have an opportunity to give K-12 students vital knowledge that will be essential for their health and wellbeing. Legislators around the world are taking action to address the dangers of climate change that threatens their citizens. It is time to do your part.

We at the Climate Justice League urge you to vote in favor of SB 854 - Comprehensive Climate Change Education in Oregon schools. Thank you for your support of SB 854. Oregon must take leadership to become the second state to legislate comprehensive climate education.

Sincerely,
Kai Schrosk, Climate Justice League
Eugene, Oregon