

Submitter: Eloise Parish Mueller
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB854

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I have lived my entire life in Oregon and attended K-12 public schools here. As an Oregon resident and youth climate justice advocate, I strongly support SB 854 and am excited about its potential to advance high quality climate change education for all young people in our state.

Growing up, I have always been deeply concerned about climate change, but over my lifetime I have watched this crisis transition from something that I perceived more as a threat to communities and ecosystems far away to something that is glaringly evident right outside my door, from dangerous heatwaves and erratic weather to multiple months of smoky and polluted air from wildfires almost every summer. And yet I am one of the relatively lucky ones-- I have not had to perform outdoor labor during times when the particulate pollution was at record breaking levels, live unsheltered during heatwave, evacuate my home, or lose loved ones during a climate disaster. For many people in my generation and community, these are the realities of climate change, which will continue to get worse in the coming years and affect all of us more and more.

I chose to study environmental science and international studies in college because I realized as a teenager that I felt a calling and duty to focus my future and career on contributing to the actualization of global climate justice, and I wanted to have a thorough and well rounded understanding of the scientific/ physical, political, and social context in order to be the best possible advocate and problem-solver. While I firmly believe that every student in Oregon should have the right to free public university, the unfortunate reality is that access to higher education is still highly influenced by social and economic inequalities. Everyone growing up in Oregon should have the chance to get a well rounded education on this topic which is of such vital importance to our generations and our future, and guaranteeing this as part of K-12 schooling is an excellent way to ensure this and to empower and support students from a young age.

Thank you for considering this bill and please advance it so that Oregon can be a national leader in climate education!

Sincerely,
Eloise Parish Mueller