

Submitter: Laura Kimberly  
On Behalf Of: Oregon Library Association  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

My name is Laura Kimberly, I am the Library Director at the Newport Public Library based out of Newport, OR. I'm here to speak in support of the Oregon Library Association's priority bills – SB 885 to provide more broadband infrastructure funding for public libraries & SB 1075 to add a position at the Oregon Department of Education which would be focused on supporting school library media programs statewide.

#### SB885:

Currently, 10% of Oregon's public libraries have internet speeds lower than the FCC's current (and outdated) definition for broadband: 25 Mbps for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads. To help upgrade critical broadband infrastructure for public libraries, OLA is asking for:

1. A part-time consultant to contract with the State Library to act as a E-Rate consultant for all of Oregon's public libraries, helping them file the complicated application to fund up to 90% of a given project; and
2. \$750,000 to be directed to the newly created Connecting Oregon Libraries Fund, established by HB 4092 in 2022.

My community saw a huge impact when COVID occurred with access to Internet. We ended up applying for ARPA funds to boost our library Wi-Fi, purchase mobile hotspots, and created a device check out program to help our community members.

#### SB1075:

OLA is asking for funding for a fulltime FTE School Library Specialist at ODE. As recommended in a report for the legislature from the Oregon Dept. of Education, the position will work to strengthen the media program standards, update terminology, provide professional learning and technical assistance, develop academic content standards through a process of statewide engagement, and provide technical assistance to districts to implement the standards. Students in Oregon are being underserved compared to their counterparts nationally, and there is an equity issue facing students in the state, with 75% of school districts in Oregon without professionally licensed librarians. OLA believes adding a school library media specialist at ODE is an important first step towards rectifying the current crisis facing school libraries, that is why we introduced SB 1075 to require ODE to do specific work that will require they hire a new dedicated full-time staff position. Investment is

critical to manage this disparity and put Oregon on the right track for its young learners.

SB 885 and SB 1075 passed out of the Senate Education Committee, and have been referred to Ways & Means. I humbly ask that you support of SB 885 & SB 1075 to leverage Federal funds and support libraries across Oregon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Laura Kimberly  
Oregon Library Association Member and Librarian