



**HB: 2280**

Letter of Support | April 25, 2023

To: The Senate Committee on Education  
From: Ava Colleran, Oregon Student Voice  
RE: Support for HB 2280

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the committee-

My name is Ava Colleran and I serve as the Co-Amplify Director of Policy for [Oregon Student Voice](#), a student-led organization that empowers students to be authentic partners with K-12 decision makers. I am also a Junior in high school in Portland, Oregon. I am writing on behalf of Oregon Student Voice in support of House Bill 2280.

This bill would create a more clear definition of consent as defined in current sexual harassment policies in Oregon school districts. Ambiguity of law is extremely harmful and dangerous to victims and survivors who are seeking justice. Sexual harassment is an issue that is often muddled in a very grey area, and having clear definitions for terms such as consent may alleviate some of this confusion and support victims of sexual harassment.

This bill would also fix a misalignment in Oregon laws and rules. Oregon's current laws require schools to have sexual harassment policies that use an implied definition of consent, stating that consent cannot be present when a person is incapacitated, unconscious or pressured through physical force, coercion, or threats. This definition does not match up with Oregon's rules and standards related to comprehensive sexuality education. OAR 581-022-2050 defines consensual as the presence of a "yes" when "no" is a viable option. Health education in Oregon defines consent as a "freely given yes." I can remember learning the acronym FRIES in my health class to define consent, Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific. The idea of consent being "freely given" teaches students bodily autonomy and that they deserve to be treated with respect.

The definition of consent being a "freely given yes" places the emphasis of consent on the yes, and agreeing to whatever event or situation may be taking place. However, by saying that consent is the presence of a "yes" when "no" is a viable option places the emphasis on saying no, and stopping whatever act is taking place instead of agreeing to it in the first place. By having a more clear definition of consent, the power is being placed in the hands of students and having bodily autonomy over what situations they chose to be in and take part in, not simply stopping things they don't want to happen to them.

HB 2280 defines "without consent" as "Without the knowing, voluntary and clear agreement by all parties to participate in the specific act." This places an emphasis on informed and freely given agreement. This supports victims of sexual harassment and helps put the power back into the hands of students to make their own decisions surrounding their bodies.

Oregon Student Voice urges you to vote yes on HB 2280 to provide a clearer definition of consent to students and help them better understand their rights and choices when it comes to sexual harassment.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ava Colleran  
*Oregon Student Voice*