

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1552

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I write to you today as a fervent advocate for equitable and transformative education, deeply committed to the belief that education is a fundamental right that should be accessible and responsive to the needs of all, particularly our youth. The passage of SB 1552 is not merely a legislative necessity; it is a moral imperative that aligns with our collective duty to foster an inclusive, empowering, and progressive educational environment for every student in Oregon.

Firstly, the establishment of a youth advisory council under SB 1552 represents a significant step towards democratizing education policy. By integrating the voices of young people directly into the decision-making process, we ensure that our educational system reflects the diverse needs, aspirations, and challenges of the students it serves. This initiative embodies the principle of empowering the community's most vulnerable members, guaranteeing that our youth are not merely subjects of policy but active participants in shaping their educational journey.

Moreover, the directive for the Department of Education to collect and analyze course-level completion and grade data for students in grades 6 through 12 is a critical measure for achieving educational equity. This data-driven approach allows us to identify disparities and target interventions where they are most needed, ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity to succeed. By making this data available to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for direct admissions, we are taking a significant step towards dismantling the barriers to higher education and opening doors for all students to pursue their academic and professional dreams.

The focus on modifying the funding calculations for the Youth Corrections Education Program and the Juvenile Detention Education Program, along with the establishment of target funding levels, is a commendable approach to addressing the educational needs of incarcerated youth. In a society that often marginalizes these individuals, providing adequate funding and resources for their education is a powerful statement of our commitment to rehabilitation, social justice, and the belief that everyone deserves a second chance.

Furthermore, the expansion of the Oregon Open Educational Resources (OER) Program and the initiatives aimed at improving access to higher education, such as the applied baccalaureate degrees pilot program and the study on evidence-based

corequisite student support models, reflect a profound understanding of the need to innovate and adapt our educational practices to meet the evolving demands of the workforce and society at large.

In conclusion, SB 1552 represents a bold and comprehensive approach to reforming education in Oregon, guided by principles of equity, inclusivity, and social justice. I urge you to support this bill, not only as a legislative action but as a reaffirmation of our shared values and our commitment to building a brighter, more equitable future for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Devon Lawson-McCourt
Associated Student Body Business Manager
11th Grade Class Treasurer