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House Education Committee : HB2318 Relating to assessments of public school students

Chair Doherty and Members of the House Committee:

My name is David Rothwell and I am an Assistant Professor in the College of Public Health at Oregon State University. I have worked on and studied anti-poverty interventions for over 16 years, with a specific focus on policies and programs for families. I am submitting this written testimony based on my research expertise. My testimony does not reflect a position taken by the Oregon State University.

I am writing to ask that you oppose HB2318 that would ban statewide or district mandated commercially developed in children between pre-K and second grade. In considering the proposed ban, I hope you will recognize that the existing assessments provide tremendous value for understanding and improving child well-being in Oregon. My concerns with HB2318 center on three issues:

1. **Early assessment matters for understanding child development.** An extensive body of research has shown that assessment during the pre-K to second grade years can predict later learning and life outcomes (McClelland et al., 2018). Statewide data on the early years is needed to understand how to improve later life well-being.
2. **Early assessment matters for understanding inequality.** Inequalities in child well-being are wide and growing over time in Oregon. In early childhood, these inequalities are centered on socio-economic status, geography, and immigration (Lipscomb et al., 2019). The OKA system allows for education policymakers to identify the extent of these inequalities, how they are changing over time, and where to target scarce public resources.
3. **Banning science does not solve the problems faced by teachers and students.** Yes, early assessment can be improved, but banning science will only move our collective understanding backwards. Without evidence-based data on the pre-K to second grade years, educators, policymakers, and parents can only speculate on how to improve the current challenges facing young Oregonians.

In sum, the current system of assessments provide a consistent source of information that schools, school districts, and the state use to improve child well-being. I hope these assessment continue because they are necessary to improve early learning. Thank you for considering my testimony in opposition to HB2318.

Sincerely,

David W. Rothwell
Assistant Professor