

Testimony in favor of HB 2307 – CTE Safety Study

My name is Don Domes and I am a Licensed Tax and Small Business Consultant from Hillsboro, Oregon. I also have over 35 years of Technology Education and CTE teaching experience.

I want to commend Representative Reardon for bringing forward this bill. In the distant past we had a Technology Teacher training system that had extensive safety training within a college degree from Oregon State University. That program closed in 1991. That is 27 years ago. The traditional “college trained shop teacher” is almost extinct.

The advertisements for Measure 98 focused on bringing back CTE and Vocational training. Prior Legislatures have funded CTE and STEM innovation grants over the last 6 years to increase student engagement.

OSHA monitors safety for employees. OSHA provides extensive monitoring systems and guidelines. There is no “OSHA” for students, they are not employees.

Teachers are now faced with unprecedented large class sizes, student behaviors that are alarming, and in some cases there are very low budgets for equipment and tool maintenance. Student behavior that is not appropriate for lab activities needs clear expectations and consequences so that other students and instructors are not endangered. We need to be diligent to make sure safety is not compromised.

To become a teacher today a person simply needs a bachelor degree in anything followed by a one year MAT (Masters of Arts in Teaching). That one year also includes the student teaching component. The extensive safety training that I received at OSU as an undergrad and graduate in Technology Education no longer exists in the educator training systems. A person can become a CTE teacher without even an Associate Degree in some cases. Administrators may not have any of the safety training that would alert them to potential dangers. The safety trained educators that protected lab students in the past may no longer be there.

The value of Hands on Lab activities is well known, but Oregon has no clear guidelines for Lab physical size relative to the number of students placed in the lab! Other providers of lab activities are also stepping in with Maker Spaces, after school activities, and summer programs. This is commendable, but activities often have safety considerations that may be overlooked by the untrained.

So many things have changed in the last 30 years that it is time we study safety in our children’s activities. We have many teachers and other providers who may have never had adequate safety training specific to the content they teach.

I support HB 2307