

Testimony for SB 433

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Under a bill passed in 2015, Oregon parents have a right to opt their children out of the statewide summative assessment. The intent of that previous bill was to allow parents to opt out for any reason from a statewide standardized test. This intent was subverted at the State Board of Education where it was determined in rule making that the only state test it would apply to was the Smarter Balanced Assessment. This bill specifies that parents and adult students can choose to opt out of ALL statewide standardized tests for any reason and lists those tests specifically.

Some schools and districts have attempted to make the opt out form required by law less available by doing things like only sending it out electronically (rather than sending a paper copy with children) or burying the form somewhere on their website thus making it less accessible, particularly to families who do not have access to internet or for whom English is not their first language. These attempts by school districts push what was mostly a compliance issue into also being an equity issue since the only people receiving the information that was intended for all is only going to those who speak English and have internet access.

I support SB 433 because it helps give families, adult students, and other stakeholders the information they need to make their own decisions about what is right for them when it comes to state testing. It requires that the form not include (A) Any factually incorrect information; (B) Any statement that advocates for or against a parent or an adult student excusing a student from taking the statewide standardized assessment; or (C) Any statement that includes conjecture or speculation about future events, including the possibility of losing financial resources, resulting from a parent or an adult student excusing a student from taking the statewide standardized assessment. All of these have been used in the past to cajole or threaten people into participating in these assessments.