

Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Education  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Yes on SB 282

March 25, 2019

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Denisha Jones and I am the Director of Teacher Education and an Assistant Professor at Trinity Washington University in Washington, DC. I also serve as the Director of Early Childhood Organizing, for Defending the Early Years (DEY), a grassroots advocacy organization that seeks to protect young children from inappropriate curriculum, assessment, and practices. As a former kindergarten teacher, preschool director, and current teacher educator, I have spent the past 15 years working as an advocate for high-quality early childhood education. Given my vast experience and knowledge of child development, I write today to declare my support for SB 282. For the reasons listed below, I hope the Senate Committee on Education will support the successful passage of this much-needed legislation.

Anyone who spends times with young people or in schools knows that technology has become a ubiquitous presence in their lives. As adults we often allow technology to dominate our lives as part of our careers and how we communicate with friends and families. And although many of us are addicted to our phones and laptops, as adults we can recognize the harm that comes from too much screen time and takes steps to take a break and unplug. Unfortunately, many young people are unable to recognize the danger from too much screen time and lack the skills needed to take a break from technology. Based on the way children develop over time, it should not come as a shock to anyone that too much exposure to digital media hurts child development. In 2016 the American Academy of Pediatrics announced new guidelines for children's media use. Evidence of the negative impact digital media can have on young children was enough to recommend children 18-months or younger receive no screen time while children ages 2-6 are limited to one hour of screen time a day. If the nation's largest organization of pediatric doctors recognizes that limiting screen time is important for the healthy development of young children, then it is imperative that Oregon legislature follow suit and do what is necessary to embrace the recommendations.

Although technology does provide some benefit to young children, the dangers clearly warrant serious attention. Whether it's the lack of manufacturing labels warning parents about the dangers of technology, or the exposure of student privacy data to technology companies, schools can no longer ignore these issues. If the state of Oregon truly seeks to prioritize the physical and mental health of all students, the legislature has a responsibility to ensure that SB 282 is passed and implemented. We cannot roll back the clock and limit the expansion of technology into our society, however, we must do what is necessary to protect children from the harms that overexposure to digital media can cause. I hope you will join me in supporting SB 282. If you have any questions regarding my testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email listed below. Thank you and have a great day!

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