To: House Rules Committee
From: Kate Titus, Common Cause Oregon
Re: HB 3310, Oregon Voting Rights Act
Date: April 15, 2019

Thank you for taking this testimony on behalf of Common Cause.

Common Cause
Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works for open, honest, accountable government. We're more than one million Americans – including 25,000 Oregonians – working together to realize the unfinished promise of democracy.

HB 3310, Oregon Voting Rights Act
All of us here today – legislators and community members alike – share the value of democracy. Regardless of our politics and perspectives on any number of issues, we all accept a commitment to work together through a democratic process. Over the course of history, we have often failed to achieve the full promise of democracy. Yet we continue to work toward a more perfect union.

Oregon elected government is not – and has never been – fully reflective of the population in terms of race, gender, or economic means. This is not a fluke of nature. It is the result of structural barriers.

If any part of our government needs to be more reflective of the state's population at this time, certainly it is that which oversees our education system. Our student population is more racially diverse than the adult population and faces unacceptable inequities in education. And yet, 7 of the 10 most diverse communities in Oregon have never elected a person of color to their school boards.

This bill offers us a proactive and positive tool that we can use to bring Oregon school districts, education service districts, and community college boards into alignment with the National Voting Rights Act. It makes it easier for communities and government alike to identify and solve structural barriers that keep minority populations from representation, potentially avoiding costly litigation.

Common Cause strongly supports this bill. We urge the committee to do the same.