



HB 2023: Academic Content Standards

Letter of Support | April 30, 2019

To Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Mei Xu and I am a sophomore at Lincoln High School in Portland, Oregon. I am also a member of [Oregon Student Voice \(OSV\)](#), a youth-led nonprofit that empowers students to be authentic partners with K-12 education decision makers. I am writing on behalf of OSV in support of House Bill 2023. This bill directs the State Board of Education to ensure that academic content standards for certain subjects include sufficient instruction on histories, contributions, and perspectives of certain classifications of individuals. This bill is extremely important for students to respectfully consider and understand different perspectives of history and society through core academic subjects. In the following, I share how this bill would positively impact my peers and myself.

The main goal of education is for students to develop skills, prepare for future success, and promote academic integrity and equity for a diverse population of students within the Oregon public school system. When students walk into class they expect to be represented within the books they read, the textbooks they open and the content they are taught. As a student of color myself, I want classrooms to be safe spaces where my peers and I are able to express ourselves rather than conform to a mold. House Bill 2023 does this by engaging all students with a curriculum that embodies individuals who are of Native American, African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino or Middle Eastern descent, and those who are women, who have disabilities, are immigrants or refugees, are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

House Bill 2023 also asks that school districts consider a longer school day, week or year for the purpose of increasing the total number of school hours available. On average, Oregon students spend only 165 days in school, almost three weeks less than the national average. While we believe students should spend more time in school, we appreciate that House Bill 2023 leaves flexibility for how school districts will enact this without providing an overall mandate as each community will be affected differently.

I, as well as the high school members of Oregon Student Voice, believe that House Bill 2023 has the potential to help our education system better recognize diversity and prepare students to be successful in the future. This bill is an important step to emphasize the value of education and fully prepare students for the rest of their lives. No student should be scared of not having the resources to meet graduation minimums. And certainly, no student should feel unrepresented and disconnected to their peers because of the schooling curriculum. We hope that the House Committee on Education approves House Bill 2023.

Thank you for your consideration,
Mei Xu



Oregon Student Voice