February 10ᵗʰ, 2020

RE: HB4098

Chair Rep. Doherty and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Terrel Smith and I am currently the only Computer Science teacher at Sherwood High School. I have taught in the district for 41 years. In addition, I have been an active member of the Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association (OregonCSTA) for the past 30 years, both as a member of the leadership board and currently as the President-elect.

I am speaking in favor of HB 4098. It is imperative to have a coordinated top down plan to make available computer science learning to all Oregon students. The research of OregonCSTA indicates that 37% of high schools in Oregon offer computer science courses. Within this 37% are many schools who offer model Computer Science (CS) programs at the secondary level. I would like to offer information on one such program, the Computer Science program at Sherwood High School. Since early 2000 when the Sherwood School District implemented a two-course Technology graduation requirement, 2.4 FTE (full time equivalent) has been allocated to engineering and computer science instruction. I have been teaching CS at Sherwood High School since 1983 and full time from 1999.

I currently teach approximately 160 students a day and about 450 per year in computer science. These students have opportunities to choose from over 25 CS topics, from game design to artificial intelligence and machine learning. I did not create this learning environment out of a vacuum. I have been attending the workshops offered by OregonCSTA for over 25 years to learn how to deliver quality CS educational experiences to my students. Learning from experienced K-12 CS teachers has been inspirational and impactful. My main source of pedagogical professional knowledge has come from these workshops. OregonCSTA is the only CS and engineering Professional Development (PD) entity in Oregon reaching the entire state with K-12 high tech professional development. With the support of the ODE Digital Literacy grants, OregonCSTA has trained over 500 educators per year in Oregon in the recent 4 years.

As a result of the current efforts of OregonCSTA over the last 8 years, the percentage of high schools offering CS courses have moved from just over 20% to 37%. I have been personally involved with mentoring many of these new programs on behalf of OregonCSTA.

HB 4098 would bring state level support to the momentum that OregonCSTA has created. State adopted standards, curriculum guidelines, and oversight is critical to reach all Oregon students. Professional development will need to be a significant factor in the success of this initiative. There are no higher education institutions in Oregon providing CS teacher training for K-12 educators. This necessary professional development must come from organizations like OregonCSTA in order to train the large numbers of teachers required to implement the programs needed to reach all Oregon students.

Sincerely,

Terrel Smith

Computer Science Teacher, Sherwood High School

President-elect & Grant Director, Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association

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