

**Testimony of the Oregon State Bar
in Support of SB 513
Before the Senate Committee on Education
March 10, 2021**

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee:

The Oregon State Bar supports SB 513, which would make civics education a requirement for receiving a high school diploma in Oregon.

Oregon's and America's system of justice is premised on the idea that individuals understand their rights, and are able to assert them when something goes wrong. As we all know, far too often this is not the case. When individuals are unaware of their rights or don't understand how our justice system works, they are more likely to be taken advantage of and less likely to make decisions that set them up for success in the future.

Educating students on how our government functions, including how our court system functions, is key to ensuring that those students will be empowered to protect not just their own rights, but also those of their fellow citizens in the future. Students who are taught civics will grow up to be adults who are more likely to vote, more likely to attend college, and more likely to engage with their government.

Our democracy is strongest and healthiest when Americans are engaged in the process. Requiring that students be taught civics is a small but very attainable step we can make to help strengthen our democracy.

Respectfully submitted,



Katherine Denning
Oregon State Bar
Chair, Public Affairs Committee