



Date: March 10, 2021
To: Senate Education Committee, Chair Dembrow and Members
From: Jared Mason-Gere, Oregon Education Association Government Relations
RE: *Opposition to SB 513*

The Oregon Education Association, on behalf of our 41,000 member educators across Oregon urge your opposition to SB 513.

With everything that has transpired in the United States in recent years, it is reasonable to be searching for methods to improve the ways in which citizens interact with their government and with one another. Public discourse is faltering and the understanding of the constitution and opportunities for engaging with our representative government are at a low water mark.

It is important to recognize, however, that the Oregon K-12 Content Standards for Social Sciences already mandate civics education as a core component of curriculum for grades K-8, and three years of social sciences are required for graduation from high school. Key aspects of US history and government are embedded in each of these subjects as well.

We would argue that what is lacking is adequate time to teach social sciences content in classrooms as schools continually squeeze out subjects that aren't subject to statewide assessments. Social sciences is also a fluid subject which, unlike most other subjects, creates new content with each passing day. We must ensure adequate time to teach and ensure that the standards do continue to update to accommodate new historical events and changes to state and national laws.

We also argue that social studies, like other subjects, includes concepts that build on one another. A most complete comprehension of history, government, civics, and other topics comes from routine study and a curriculum that builds on the thorough understanding of prior coursework. Students will be best served by multiple years' worth of interaction with this subject matter, rather than an attempt to stuff multiple years' worth of civics into a single semester.

We encourage you to reject SB 513 and focus instead on SB 702 and make any changes to the statewide standards in an inclusive process that incorporates educators at all levels and a multitude of voices to insure the most modern and comprehensive approach to instruction in civics and all other social sciences subjects that are already required for graduation. Please oppose SB 513.