

Good afternoon, Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to be a part of this important democratic process.

For the record, my name is James Moran. I have taught social studies for 22 years, from third grade and all the way up to college-level history and government classes. I am a 2012 James Madison Constitutional Scholar, and I am currently teaching in Dallas School District.

On Jan. 27, 1838, Lincoln spoke in Springfield, Illinois, about *"the perpetuation of our political institutions."* During that address, he said: *"At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."*

In this speech, Lincoln denounced mob rule and how this will lead to chaos and ultimately the end of our republican form of government.

But allow me to focus on just a part of Lincoln's thoughts in this excerpt. He states that the danger "must spring amongst. It cannot come from abroad". Our nation is built upon the noble idea of common people, commanding their own course and electing their leaders. But this is based upon another important American idea: That our citizenry is educated. Educated not only on their ability to read, write and complete math problems. But to think critically about facts and non-facts. To understand the basic functions of government, how civically become engaged with our government, and how to activate those levers of government to become a fully engaged citizen.

Additionally, another survey stated, only 24% of high school seniors test at or above proficiency level in civics. But most shocking is a 2012 survey that showed 57 percent of the public disagreed with the idea that the "government is really run for the benefit of all the people." Let me repeat this, **57 percent of the public thinks the government does not help benefit the people.** If 57% of Americans believe our government does not work for them, then what might be the alternative for them? I believe we saw the manifestations of this on January 6th.

I applaud this committee's efforts to support Social Studies education in Oregon, and I am here to urge your support for and passage of Senate Bill 702 so we can build a stronger republic.

As a social studies teacher, the January 6th violent attempted coup on our nation's capitol building, filled my heart with sadness as I witnessed an all-out assault on my republic and our fundamental ideal of rule of law. But, to be honest, the attack was foreseen by myself and other social studies teachers as we have witnessed a continued de-emphasation of social studies education across our nation over the past 20 years.

In the early 2000s, the United States government spent around \$40 million on civic programs. But in 2010. Congress defunded many programs social studies programs and shifted funding to

STEM education, and leaving Social Studies with very little funding. Currently, the US government spends \$3 billion on STEM education. This works out to be \$54 per student. Meanwhile, civics receives only \$4 million - which works out to be about five cents per student.

Would Senate Bill 702 resolve all the issues as it relates to underfunding and the neglect of Social studies in public schools? No, but this is a down payment on bringing social studies to become relevant again in our public education. And this is why I urge you to support this bill.

Also. I would recommend adding a middle school and elementary teacher to the proposed task force. It is imperative to receive input from these important educational stakeholders too. They can give a voice to how social education in elementary and middle school is being gutted and pushed aside for other subjects.

So In closing, I urge you to support Senate Bill 702 in order to save our republic.