

Isabela Villarreal
333 SE 2nd Ave.
Portland, OR 97214

RE: Support SB 513

March 10, 2021



Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

For the record my name is Isabela Villarreal, I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Policy and Communications Manager at Next Up Action Fund, formerly known as the Bus Project. Our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. As an organization that builds political power and strong, effective leadership pipelines for diverse young people we support SB 513 with the -1 amendment which will have every student receive one semester of civics education, and importantly, does not increase the number of credits that students need to graduate.

In June 2020 Next Up Action Fund hosted 7 focus groups to hear firsthand about people's perspectives and experiences with civics education in Oregon. This group of 40 people included current high school students, recent high school graduates (who finished within the last 1-3 years), and high school teachers from 24 different high schools across Oregon. It became clear that not all students were receiving the same information surrounding civic engagement, and the opportunity was often highly dependent upon what teacher they had, a certain class being offered, a club or what school they attended. This is an inequity issue. Students shouldn't be discounted from learning particular information just because of their zip code. Civics education is an important way to break down barriers for students of color and marginalized communities, and start building power and justice where young people are already at: school.

We see this as a complementary effort to SB 702. While this bill is not the beginning or end of civics education for students, it can help better ensure that every student is getting access to important, standardized information on how they can engage with government, their community, and be active participants in society.

We recommend passing SB 513 with the -1 amendment so that inequities in our education system are lessened, and every single student can learn the civics skills, dispositions, and knowledge that is so useful for the rest of their lives.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal
Policy and Communications Manager