



February 8, 2021

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of OR, we respectfully request your support for House Bill 2570.

Acquiring STEM skills constitutes an essential part of today's curriculum, but not all students have been or are being given equal access to it. Failing to provide this access to all Oregon's students is not only fundamentally unfair and hampers their educational development, but it also deprives Oregon of the STEM-educated talent that Oregon continues to need in order to move forward.

STEM education is not simply learning about how to type on a keyboard, but as HB 2570 recognizes, it provides students critical ways of thinking and problem solving. Today's technology is far from being a static entity, and in fact one might say STEM intrinsically connotes change and new development. Without a solid foundation in STEM, Oregon's youth will encounter increasing challenges in adapting to and improving upon these new technologies.

Importantly, HB 2570 also acknowledges that STEM education involves literacy and communications skills. It also requires teachers who have been trained in STEM and can have access to continuing educational instruction and well devised curricula with which to teach.

STEM education can be fun and should be offered at all K - 12 levels. It is also relevant, which will also encourage students' continuing involvement in in the educational system.

It is likely that this Committee is familiar with the benefits of STEM education, but HB 2570 also authorizes the development of a statewide strategic plan to provide it. This process is essential to ensuring that all Oregon's students receive high quality, up-to-date STEM education. A hodge-podge or hit-or-miss approach is unacceptable, and the work group established under HB 2570 wisely brings in a number of entities that will provide critical input to the promulgation of a fair and effective statewide plan for STEM education.

Respectfully Submitted,

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