

I write in support of SB 744, a bill to Eliminate Oregon's Graduation Barrier

A large body of research has shown that use of currently available standardized testing exacerbates racial and economic discrimination and segregation in schools. That same research has shown that disadvantaged students are also more likely to drop out of school, that teachers are adversely affected and are less likely to collaborate in improving instruction, while being incentivized to use methods like rote memorization and drills, rather than those that require thinking and synthesis on the part of students. And most ironic perhaps is that standardized testing does not actually predict how prepared students are for college and how likely they are to succeed there. Rather, students find that the ways they were taught to use to learn in high school are not those that work in university classes. I've spent my entire academic career in post-secondary education, and I can attest that how students may think and write can have nothing to do with the scores they came from high school with.

I urge you to pass SB744 and allow teachers to do what they are all about: developing curricula, teaching those curricula and evaluating how each student performs in the broad context of classroom, homework and tests.

Sincerely,

Professor Martin Mendelson, M.D., Ph.D