

February 1, 2022

Chair Teresa Alonso Leon
Vice-Chair Courtney Neron
Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber
Members of the House Education Committee

RE: HB 4112 – Relating to Ethnic Studies Standards & Professional Learning Opportunities

Dear Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Weber and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Cayle Tern. I am a Southeast Asian refugee from Laos and a person of color that grew up in our public education system. I am a father of 4 wonderful children that attend our public schools. I currently serve on the Reynolds School District #7 Board of Directors. I am the Immigrant Programs Manager with the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO). I currently serve the Iu Mien Association of Oregon (IMAO) as the community president. I am submitting my testimony as the President of the Iu Mien Community in Oregon.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 4112. This cannot be further from the truth. The truth is Equity policies create rigorous, honest learning opportunities that include and engage all students. It helps foster a positive learning environment where children feel accepted, welcomed, and given space to teach and learn about one another's heritage and background. I grew up in an education system that did not Ethnic Studies as valuable. I often felt that my cultural values and traditions were unwelcomed. I was made to feel that it was my responsibility to find a way to fit into American culture. The lack of understanding and willingness to accept who I was made it less desirable to fully engage in classroom activities. Ethnic Studies would have fostered a safe environment where students like me would have been more willing to teach others about my heritage and background. However, I am not submitting testimony to talk about the importance of having an inclusive, equitable, and racially just education system. This was proven by you and your colleagues when you passed HB2845: Ethnic Studies Standards back in 2017.

As an Asian immigrant, I received questions and statements out of ignorance on several occasions. The lack of basic understanding of diversity is surprising. The experience that I had with teachers that asked similar questions is disheartening. I believe that Ethnic Studies Standards will begin the process of educating, building a bridge for healing, and bringing communities together. I am providing testimony to ask you all to keep your promise and take the responsibility to train and support our educators as they implement Ethnic Studies standards in K-12 schools. Our schools are already dealing with lack of adequate funding to support the current programs and curriculum. Without adequate funding, schools will put the necessary training teachers need on the back burner. This is why I urge you to vote "yes" on HB4112 to invest \$1.25 million in professional development for educators to teach ethnic studies.

Sincerely,



Cayle Tern, MSW