



February 2, 2022

On behalf of the American Association of University Women of Oregon (AAUW of OR), we express our strong support for Senate Bill 1521.

We are appalled at Oregon superintendents and school board members having to face dismissal, and dismissal without cause, for doing their jobs. These administrators and educators work hard and face a myriad of tough decisions even in the best of times, and COVID's pandemic has significantly exacerbated their burdens. They now face political dissension, fear, derision and dismissal. This situation cannot be tolerated.

We ponder what lessons our youth are actually learning, particularly because young people are acutely aware of the difference between what everyone says and what really happens. We say we endorse education and freedom of speech, but firing these educational professionals and school board members says otherwise. We are gravely concerned about the impact of these actions on Oregon's youth.

Instead of focusing on students' needs, equitable outcomes or following public health and safety laws, these community leaders have had to spend valuable time attending to angry, insistent voices telling them not to do their jobs.

It is particularly disturbing that the political backlash educational professionals and school board members currently face largely stems from advancing the principles of equity and teaching the truth. Many of us have had to face the fact that the American history we learned was profoundly deficient and omitted key facts about our racism. It is not easy or comfortable to learn about these omissions, but we must undertake the journey to discover these errors and omissions, as well as to understand our strengths. And so must our youth. This is what education and learning is all about. Although first graders will not be taught about this topic with the same curriculum that seniors are asked to grapple with, continuing to teach un-truths sets a dangerous path that can lead to further rancor and abandonment of the truths we should hold to be self evident.

Some Oregonians have unconscionably placed superintendents and school board members with a Hobson's, indeed a Kafka-esque, choice - follow the law and be fired, or flout the law.

We urge the passage of Senate Bill 1521.

Respectfully Submitted,

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