

February 3, 2022

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

Re: Support for HB 4099 – Racial Equity and Justice Youth Collaborative

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Committee on Education--

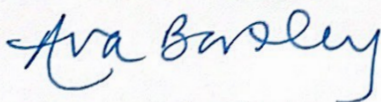
Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **HB 4099**, a bill that establishes the Racial Equity and Justice Youth Collaborative (“REJ Youth Collaborative”) and sets up a work group to develop standards that will be used to select the members of the REJ Youth Collaborative.

FACT Oregon is the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, designated Parent Training Information (PTI) Center serving Oregon families as they navigate Special Education services. We help thousands of families each year navigate raising a child experiencing disability by providing peer delivered support, training, and resources. We support and equip families, wherever they may be on their journey. The outcome of our work is families with high expectations for their child and a vision for the future where our schools and communities are accessible, welcoming, and embrace that disability is natural.

As Oregon’s PTI, we know from our work with families and children how important it is to elevate the voices of youth. And we wholeheartedly support the idea and concept behind this bill, which is that diverse youth deserve a seat at the policy-making table.

We also appreciate the additional directive in Section 4 of the bill that members of the work group that are selected by the Department of Education, as well as the actual Governor-appointed members of the REJ Youth Collaborative, once they are chosen, must include some individuals who identify as being a child with a disability, as defined in ORS 343.035. Representation matters, and including the voices of youth with disabilities, particularly those who might also identify as a member of another group that has historically been, or that currently is, underrepresented or underserved, is extremely important, as we know that the barriers experienced by youth with intersectional identities can be compounding.

Thank you for considering this testimony. *We urge you to vote “yes” in support of HB 4099.*



Ava Bartley, Policy Director
FACT Oregon