

Submitter: Majalise Tolan
On Behalf Of: OASSA
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB4099

Good afternoon, Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Education Committee. For the record, my name is Majalise Tolan, past-president of Oregon Association of Secondary School Administrators and Secondary Director in the Lincoln County School District.

I'm supportive of HB 4099 because statewide representation of youth voice is necessary to improve their experience, but we continue to fall short in hearing all of them.

While some believe youth should self-advocate and tell us about unfair treatment, for historically and currently underrepresented or underserved students, this is not that easy. A former student provided examples of policies used painfully against, her and I had been blind to her perspective. In my school. Where I loved all of my students. Families have shared examples of racial and gender-directed hate speech our students endured during athletics. They handled them alone. This is never acceptable. In both of our Oregon Students United Summits, we heard collectively from over 400 empowered students from across the state their desire to improve our systems, yet many wondered how they can have an influence when they live in rural areas of Oregon. They feel isolated and need our help in providing a way to allow them to work with administrators, community organization leaders, and Oregon Dept. of Ed staff to make positive changes for all Oregon students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, or disability. I didn't enter education to serve some and will continue to work until all really means all - across the state. HB 4099 starts that inclusive process by providing a statewide platform for youth, especially youth of color and those who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+, are emerging bilingual, are experiencing disability, or are navigating poverty to collaborate with trained adult mentors, and key decision-makers to analyze youth input, process ideas, review policies and provide feedback.

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to testify today. I urge you to vote yes on HB 4099.