

February 8th, 2022

RE: SB1590

Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Terrel Smith and I currently teach Computer Science at Sherwood High School. I have taught in the district for over 40 years. In addition, I have been an active member of the Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association (OregonCSTA) for the past 30 years, both as a member of the leadership board and currently as Past-President. The Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association provides computer science and engineering professional development to K-12 Oregon educators.

I currently teach approximately 140 students a day which is over 400 per year. These students have opportunities to choose from over 15 CS topics, from game design to artificial intelligence and machine learning. I did not create this learning environment out of a vacuum. I have been attending the workshops offered by OregonCSTA for over 25 years to learn how to deliver quality CS educational experiences to my students. The Sherwood School District is the only district in Oregon that requires two computer science and/or high-tech digital design classes to graduate from high school.

I am writing this letter in favor of SB 1590. It is imperative to have a coordinated top down plan to make computer science learning available to all Oregon students. The research of OregonCSTA indicates that 37% of high schools in Oregon offer computer science courses. That means that over 70% of the high schools in Oregon do not offer computer science at all. These percentages may vary some from one study to another but at best the opportunity for many Oregon students is nonexistent.

It is no secret that most of the highest demand and highest paid jobs in the US are in the high tech field. If our students are not exposed to these opportunities, we are failing them. It is a social justice concern not to provide our students with opportunities to learn computer science and digital design. While this is a national concern, Oregon is behind many states in implementing measures to provide computer science learning to all students. SB 1590 is a significant step towards a coordinated effort to recognize the need and to do something about it.

SB 1590 would bring state level support to the momentum that the OregonCSTA, the STEM Council and other entities have created. The Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association is in full support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Terrel Smith

Computer Science Teacher, Sherwood High School

Past President & Grant Director, Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association

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