

Submitter: Robert Schaeffer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: SB1583

I am Robert Schaeffer, Executive Director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, known as FairTest. Founded in 1985 by leaders of civil rights, education, and student groups, FairTest works to make assessment fair, open and educationally sound. We advocate for assessments that support deeper learning and better teaching while opposing standardized exam overuse and misuse.

FairTest is pleased to endorse SB 1583 which directs the Oregon Department of Education to ensure that standardized summative assessments are administered to the “minimum extent practicable.”

Independent researchers have found that the average U.S. student must sit for more than 110 standardized tests during her or her public school career -- (<https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Testing%20Report.pdf>). Whatever one might think about the value of administering some outside exams as a check on teacher grades, the current testing level is clearly excessive.

The incredibly high volume of standardized exams experienced by current students has not produced improvements in either educational quality or equity promised by testing proponents. Though advocates claimed test-driven “reforms” would boost the academic performance of U.S. children in international competitions and narrow historic gaps between demographic groups in our own country, neither laudable objective has been accomplished. In fact, the U.S. was making more progress toward both goals in the decade prior to the passage of “No Child Less Behind” than in the twenty years since its passage (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/03/10/no-child-left-behind-what-standardized-test-scores-reveal-about-its-legacy/>)

It is now time for the Oregon Legislature to step in to require less testing, more teaching and enhanced learning for the state’s public school students. FairTest urges the Oregon House Education Committee to approve SB 1583 and advance it for a vote. Passage of this bill will be an important step toward less testing, more teaching and better learning.

We stand ready to provide any additional information needed for your deliberations.

Thank you.