

Submitter: Timothy Leyden  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure: HB2751

HB2751- Task Force on School Start Times  
PUBLIC TESTIMONY

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Faithfully submitted:  
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Good Afternoon Committee Members-

My name is Timothy Leyden and I have been a long time advocate for making sensible high school start times a reality for our state's youth. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2751.

I have taught Social Studies at Beaverton High School for 25 years, and have Bachelor degrees in Psychology, and History, from the University of Oregon. I have a Master's degree in Teaching from George Fox University, and am also certified to teach high school Science and English as a Second Language. In addition to having taught nearly every social studies subject under the sun, I taught English at a private school in Poland for two years in the early 2000s. I've been the sole AP Psychology teacher at Beaverton High School for the last 12 years. My two daughters- a senior and sophomore, attend Southridge High School in the Beaverton School District. In September 2021 I published an "In My Opinion" piece for the Oregonian, advocating for changes to public school schedules.

Now is the time for our state to seriously consider moving high school start times, to no earlier than 8:30 am.

In these challenging political times, starting school later is truly the ultimate bipartisan win-win. Why? Because sleep is the ultimate common denominator for ALL people, of ALL political backgrounds, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike. It is a foundational NEED, not want, that is common to ALL races, creeds, orientations, and ages. Along with thirst, hunger, and protection from the elements, sleep is a must, and at this point in time, our future leaders---today's Oregonian teenagers---- are being seriously and dangerously threatened by a chronic lack of sleep. You and I, and THEY, are at risk of being damaged by being underslept...and the consequences on their bodies and brain are known: absenteeism, poor grades and classroom performance, myriad negative health outcomes, addiction and mental

health issues, And WE.. have the means to help fix this.

Adolescent brains and bodies are designed so that for the vast majority of teens it is hard to go to bed early, and even harder to wake up early. This isn't really arguable—there's no debate about teen's unusual circadian rhythms----it's just biological, and medical, scientific fact. Data consistently shows our teens are not getting anywhere close to the amount of sleep recommended by groups such as the American Medical Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics. Too early start times compound the problem. Yet school districts and schools can't really control the first part of this---bedtimes.---However, they can definitely control the second....what time school starts.

In over two decades of teaching, and especially in the last few years during the stressors of Covid, I've seen firsthand the difficulties in teaching people who are too tired to focus or concentrate or engage in school. When basic human needs aren't met, learning...whatever the topic....won't be easy. In psychology this is sometimes framed as a hierarchy of needs: when the core needs of life aren't taken care of, it's foolhardy to try and learn literature, or civics, or calculus.

I would love to be of assistance in helping research this matter, or working on this matter further, in any capacity. Our state has a long history of good government working to effect practical, sensible solutions for all people. This task force would be yet another example of good leadership by and for our state's residents. Thank you for your consideration in this matter! Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for any additional information or for clarification of any of this testimony. Sincerely- Timothy Leyden