

Submitter: Gayatri Gadre
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB421

Thank you Chair Senator Dembrow and members of the committee.
My name is Gayatri Gadre and I am a sophomore student at Westview High School. I am here today testifying in support of SB 421, which would create a youth-led collaborative aiming to support diversity and give a platform to minorities and get them involved in the creation and implementation of the policies that impact their lives.

This Racial Equity and Justice Youth Collaborative is important to me because there is a lack of representation of me and those I relate to. My South Asian ethnicity is barely represented, if at all, in this school district, this state, and this country as a whole. Since I was a kid, there has been lots of talk in school about things I don't relate to, such as holidays like Thanksgiving that I don't celebrate. While I think it's important to learn about these things, I think it's equally important to learn about other peoples and their experiences too. In world history, we've always covered countries in Europe, but never ventured into Asia, South America, and only slightly touched on countries in Africa. With such a limited scope of views to learn from, we limit the amount of knowledge and ideas we can draw from history, and modern times as well. Allowing there to be a youth collaborative that is accepting of these viewpoints from minorities will help expand the thoughts of others based on their experiences, and create a more cohesive community built on understanding everyone.

This legislation will ensure that the members of the collaborative will develop as leaders, shape the creation of regional youth leadership networks, and improve how the state engages and supports youth in policy processes. They will report their learnings, recommendations, and progress with the Oregon Legislature in order to make improvements based on the knowledge they have of their peers and school environments.

I urge you to please listen to the voices of those who aren't easily heard this session and beyond. Thank you for your time and allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

Kind regards,

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