

Good afternoon, Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Darin Henry. I retired from Sheldon High School in the 4j School District in Eugene in 2021. I worked as a campus supervisor, or as I used to refer to it because of my Picuris Pueblo heritage, a professional uncle. I was the advisor to Sheldon's Environmental Club for 14 years and I belonged to and helped out with the Black Student Union, the Asian Pacific Islander Student Union, the Native American Student Union, the LGBTQ Student Union, and others.

I am writing in support of SB 421.

Without exception, during my 25 years, each and every one of the ethnic and social school clubs that I participated with enriched our campus, educating their peers and staff about their unique culture and social experiences as citizens and students on campus. These student clubs educated and helped others to understand their unique experiences as BIPOC and Queer Communities.

Besides benefiting the campus at large, students participating in these clubs were motivated academically. Some of them had regular tutoring sessions. Some created dance groups that performed in school assemblies and at other schools sharing their culture. Emotional support for one another was also a product of these clubs. Being one of the 14 black students, one of the 25 Asian students, or one of the 10 Indigenous students on a campus with 1400 students can sometimes feel awkward.

Learning and understanding more about their own cultures and sharing their cultures with others was what it was all about. Altruism was part of each of these clubs.

I've read some opposition testimonies to SB 421 on the OLIS website and saw the word, "indoctrination", many times. This word is offensive to me as someone who has worked with such clubs for a quarter century.

I support the creation of a statewide youth advisory council for minorities and LGTBQ students. From my experience, such an advisory council would benefit all Oregon students by way of educating students from different backgrounds on the richness of other cultures breeding appreciation, understanding, compassion, acceptance, equity and the finding of common ground.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darin Henry

