

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT 10/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and honorable members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, and I am the State Senator for District 10, which includes South and West Salem, Monmouth and Independence. I am here today to urge your support for SB 854, which would create a plan for integrating climate change instruction into curriculums for K-12 students.

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues facing the world today. A report last year from the Oregon Health Authority found that young people's mental health is significantly impacted by feelings of anxiety, frustration, and distress around climate change¹. They know that climate change is having far-reaching effects on biodiversity and global weather patterns, which creates major implications for their homes and communities. Giving students the tools and information to engage in discussions around climate change and climate solutions is important for helping young people feel hopeful, motivated, and empowered to create change.

SB 854 creates a framework to incorporate information about climate change and sustainability into curriculums for core K-12 subject areas. The bill was developed with input from educators and diverse stakeholders from across Oregon and has the support of the Oregon Education Association and students all over the state. Three months ago, I met with a group of Oregon high school students who told me they want to talk and learn more about climate change in school, because it helps them feel more engaged in their schoolwork and more prepared to tackle climate change issues in their community. It is on their behalf that I am advocating for this bill today, which is critical for supporting students' educations and youth mental health.

Colleagues, I urge your support for SB 854. Thank you.

Deb Patterson

¹ OHA Climate Change and Youth Mental Health Report, June 2022