

3/8/23

## Statement of Support for Oregon Legislative Senate Bill 854

Esteemed Legislators,

My name is Casey Tiemann and I am a high school counselor in Eugene, Oregon. This is my 25<sup>th</sup> year as an educator in Oregon. I have seen many changes over these years but none so concerning as the decline of our students' mental health. The latest national report from the Center for Disease Control asserts that over forty percent of our high school students report having persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, while 1 in 5 students report having seriously considered attempting suicide. Shockingly, 1 in 10 students have attempted suicide. I work with students every single day who are thinking about suicide because they don't have hope for their future, and I have lost students who have taken their own lives.

I have seen the toll that the state of national and global affairs has taken on students over the last several decades. Students report to me pervasive feelings of angst regarding the future given the myriad of social, economic, political, and ecological challenges they see around them. I want you to know that one of the things that so many students that I talk to feel most hopeless about is climate change, and I ask you to connect the dots on these critical issues.

I support Senate Bill 854 because it alleviates students' anxiety and hopelessness about the future that they currently see unfolding when we empower them with facts, tools, and resources to see possibilities and to make change. It is this fundamental need for efficacy in their lives that is most needed to address hopelessness and to inspire young people to meet their potential and our collective future. Students need education about the problems and, importantly, about possibilities for solutions - for their own empowerment and so they can be future leaders that we need.

Critically, this bill requires addressing the psychological and mental health needs of students with regard to climate change and climate change education. I ask you to connect the dots between the global needs of our planet and the mental health of our children.

Sincerely,  
Casey Tiemann  
High School Counselor  
Eugene, Oregon