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On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB854

My name is Anika Gandikota and I'm a freshman at Westview High School. I have been directly affected by climate change and so have my peers and others in my generation. First off, the air quality is getting worse by the year and most people don't exactly know what to do when that happens. When this time of year rolls around, my dad and I always remember to change the air filters but a lot of people may not know what to do in these instances. Due to the lack of education regarding the climate crisis, many families don't know what to do when things get bad. If there was more education regarding the climate crisis, knowledge of basic home upkeep and preservation of property can be more applicable. Heat waves and fires aren't the only things affecting life here in Oregon, extremely cold winters and random bursts of weather are also catching people off guard. With more education, these unnatural weather patterns can be quickly adapted to, and adding education about preventing damage to our environment could be vital in making a dent in the climate crisis. Another thing, the climate education that we do have at school or from other sources has a "doomsday" subtext to it. It makes students lose hope in reversing the effects of climate change and doesn't motivate them to do anything about it. But instead, it makes them more likely to fall into a depression that does nobody any good. That sort of pessimistic education about climate change will absolutely not help make changes in our world. Instead, if a more optimistic discovery-based curriculum was taught, students would have more hope for a better future, and they would be more likely to start making those changes. This is an important part of climate education: making more people interested in solving the crisis. I know personally, I would not want to be taught about how we're all going to die in 2050. It's horribly depressing! But if they taught us that we still have the ability to reverse the effects, then we could create a better future by 2050, I would be more interested in learning how. Additionally, if we learned about the sustainable ways of local Native American tribes, we could have a more green impact on our communities in Oregon. Not only would we learn sustainability from the indigenous people, but we'd also be supporting the preservation of indigenous history. When we teach kids about the climate, we teach them to care about the world they leave behind for the next generations. We teach them that they have the power to make a difference and that is what's most important right now. Starting this education early on will make a difference and the future of Oregon will see and appreciate that. Lawmakers, you have the power to make these changes in our state. Please make the right decision and support this bill for the sake of Oregon's youth and our state's natural beauty.