

March 24, 2023

Senate Committee on Education  
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 269, SB 270, SB 1082 and SB 517

To Committee Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing **in support of Senate Bills 269, 270, 517, and 1082** because they are each a critical piece of supporting currently and formerly incarcerated people in pursuit of education and employment.

As an educator on campus and in prisons, I have seen the positive impact of education for people of all backgrounds. As a first-generation college student from rural Oregon, I experienced the enormous power of education for myself.

Though progress has been made, **there are still multiple barriers to offering educational opportunities in our prisons.** We are behind most other states in these areas. We need the support of the Oregon Legislature, HECC and DOC to expand access to education in DOC facilities.

We are all aware that there are so many challenges for people returning to our communities from prison. **We know that formerly incarcerated students are more likely to succeed with additional support on campus. Let's give them that support.** And surely **our professional licensure boards are capable of evaluating each applicant on their merits.**

We must pass these bills in order to make success achievable for people post-incarceration and to **make our communities safer.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Deborah Rutt, DMD