

Good Morning Senate Committee Members,

My name is **Twila McDonald**, and I am a current member of the **Umpqua Community College (UCC) Board of Education**. I am here to express my **opposition to Senate Bill 478 as written**, particularly regarding the addition of a **voting student member** to community college boards.

As someone who lives in Yoncalla—a town with fewer than 1,000 residents—I understand what it means to feel underrepresented. I also serve on Yoncalla’s K-12 school board, where ensuring all voices are heard is a constant priority. I deeply appreciate efforts to expand representation, but mandating a voting student member is not the most effective or equitable solution. I urge you to consider the following key concerns:

1. Residency & Election Integrity Concerns

- Community college board members **must reside within the taxing district** because they are elected to serve **local taxpayers**. However, under this bill, a student board member:
 - Would **not** be required to live within the district—or even in the state.
 - Could be attending remotely from anywhere.
 - Would be elected through student government elections, which **do not follow the same legal requirements** as public elections.
- Unlike other board members, this student representative **would not be required to be a registered voter in Oregon** or even meet a minimum age requirement. I have personally known **high school seniors under 18** who attend UCC full-time. This lack of standardization **raises concerns about election integrity** and fairness in governance.

2. Exclusion of Part-Time Students

- Most community college students in Oregon—and over **65% of students at UCC**—are **part-time**. Yet this bill **limits the voting student representative to full-time students**, excluding the **majority** of the student body from this position.
- Community colleges serve a **diverse** range of students:
 - **Part-time learners** balancing jobs and education.
 - **High school students** earning college credits.
 - **Local business owners** and employees seeking workforce training.
 - **Community members** engaging in enrichment courses.
- Unlike four-year universities, our **primary mission extends beyond full-time degree seekers**. Elevating the voice of one subgroup while excluding others is **not truly representative governance**.

3. Alternative Solutions for Student Representation

Rather than a mandated voting member, I urge you to consider **more practical and equitable solutions**:

1. **Amending the bill to require a student board member to reside in the district and be a registered voter in Oregon.**
 - This would help ensure **local representation and election integrity**.
2. **Creating a new “voting district” for student elections, adhering to public election laws.**
 - However, this could be **logistically difficult** and might create more challenges than solutions.
3. **Mandating an ex-officio (advisory) student role instead of a voting seat.**
 - This would allow student participation **without disrupting established governance structures**.
4. **Removing the mandated student board member provision entirely.**

4. UCC’s Commitment to Student Voices

At UCC, we already **prioritize student input** through:

- **Student government associations** and regular surveys.
- **Board meeting participation** and student representation on committees.
- **Direct student choice**—students express their preferences by selecting their **schools, classes, and programs**.

Colleges that fail to listen to students will only **hurt themselves** in the long run. We recognize this, and our policies reflect it.

Conclusion

I respectfully urge the authors of this bill to **collaborate with all community colleges** to find a solution that supports **true democratic representation** while maintaining **fairness, integrity, and practicality**. **A one-size-fits-all mandate does not serve the diverse needs of Oregon’s community colleges.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time and service.

**Sincerely,
Twila McDonald**

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