

COURTNEY NERON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 26



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of SB 478

February 12, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I write in **support of Senate Bill 478**, a bill to ensure representative student voice and community accessibility to boards. As a career high school teacher, mother of some amazingly bright minds, and the State Representative for students and faculty at some of our Oregon institutions of higher education (including Portland Community College and Clackamas Community College), I write to **support student voice, accountability improvements – especially when state dollars are distributed, and strong democratic processes.**

Over my years as an educator and legislator, I have regularly uplifted policies that ensure student voice: youth advisory roles in my district's city councils and school boards, the Youth Advisory Council for the state, and the improved composition of our boards at public universities, are some examples of the value I place on student voice.

Some may **erroneously** insinuate that students are less prepared than other elected board members, but I challenge that notion. **I have only seen youth and student leaders enrich dialogue and provide valuable perspective.** Student leaders come with pencils sharp and devices charged, ready to infuse their lived experiences and the experiences of their fellow students into the work of governing bodies .

I saw that some testimony claims that changes in this bill will hinder the ability to serve students. I would argue the opposite. **What better way to serve students than to ensure they are present, respected, and accountable at the decision making levels of governance?** Allowing all stakeholders a seat at the table is core to the principle of representation.

Our public university students in Oregon already have the student rights in this bill, and I believe it is time to give parity to our community college students.

Accountability and transparency are themes throughout much of our legislation this year, which is also why I am also supportive of **requiring that all community college board of trustee email addresses be made more easily available to the community.** Publicly accessible email addresses are already a requirement of our public university board leadership and it is the least we can do to ensure this best practice for community access to their leadership bodies.

I urge your support of student voice and accountability bills this session, and hope you will include SB478 in that work.

Sincerely,

Representative Courtney Neron | House District 26: King City, Sherwood, Tigard, and Wilsonville
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