

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbrick, and members of the House Higher Education and Workforce Committee:

My name is Chris Cronin. I am pleased to share with you my support HB 2404. I live in John Day in Grant County. I am currently on the Board of Trustees for Eastern Oregon University. As Oregon's rural university, EOU serves a vast region of rural and frontier K12 school districts.

Before I retired, I worked extensively with adults and high school students who wished to earn college credits as a Center Director and advisor for EOU in John Day.

It is a huge advantage for high school students to have an opportunity to experience college-level learning and credit while they are still in high school. The EOU Early College Initiatives program does just that. It is organized to provide a high level of support, information, advising and access to students all over the region. The ECI vision statement notes that the program helps students "by building bridges, empowering students who previously were not exposed to a college going culture, and ensure diverse and equitable support."

EOU is building a program that is reaching students who might not otherwise have exposure to college classes, nor the opportunity to engage in them at a free or reduced cost.

As a Trustee, I am very proud that EOU has developed a program that has had, and will hopefully continue to have, such a positive impact on our region. The staff is deeply committed to providing both sponsored dual credit courses (classes taught by high school teachers who have been approved to offer college credit for their subject matter), and online or on campus regular EOU classes.

Whether a student plans to earn a college degree, or is preparing for a vocational future, our Early College Initiatives program gives them the confidence and encouragement that they can succeed in their aspirations.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your dedication to serving the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Chris Cronin
EOU Board of Trustees