

Dear Chair Neron and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3365. My name is Giulia Longo. I am a parent of three young children in the Talent/Phoenix school district, an active member of the community, President of our school's parent advisory committee, and a professional documentary filmmaker/photographer. I'm also an avid traveler and nature lover.

I was born in Italy, went to University in London, England, and lived in Africa for a few years as well as traveled extensively worldwide. After becoming a US citizen 15 years ago, I lived on the East Coast in Florida, and for the past 10+ years our family has planted roots in the beautiful state of Oregon where we own a small farm.

I would like to share my strong support for HB 3365 - which seeks to expand and integrate climate change instruction across all K-12 core subject areas.

I have personally experienced climate change and its effects in many different ways. Climate change is directly responsible for many of the stories of extreme hardship I have personally reported on while working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and numerous other NGOs.

In all corners of the planet, we are seeing rising temperatures and sea levels, droughts and floods, increased and more devastating wildfires, stronger hurricanes and weather systems, and general instability that those natural disasters bring to the populations that are affected by them.

Climate change has also affected me personally. Since living in Oregon my respiratory and nervous system have suffered the effects of what has become a yearly recurring 5th season now dubbed, "the smoke season". Every summer we find ourselves climate refugees as we seek to escape what are consistently unhealthy to hazardous conditions with AQI (air quality index) well above 300. I have been reluctant to invest in planting my fields with grapes and lavender as we initially set out to do when we purchased this land because we have had years of no water in the irrigation canal including over 100 consecutive days of no rains with record temperatures above 115 F.

My personal struggle is nothing compared to those that I have witnessed. A mere third of a mile down the road from where I live there are hundreds of families who lost their homes and all their belongings due to wildfire. Our town of Talent is next door to Ashland, once a mecca for tourism, but now the severely impacted businesses are curtailing operations. In North Carolina, people I know are grieving the loss of loved ones that were washed away by a landslide and my husband's family in Florida is living in temporary housing because an abnormally strong hurricane destroyed their house. Even my ancestral home in Italy is threatened by rising sea levels. Far enough from our cushioned existence in this country children in Africa are dying of malnutrition because the rains never arrived to grow the food their family depends on. Their 5th season is now called "Wanyala" or "the hunger season".

This human tragedy is not lived alone. Thousands of species of animals are going extinct because their fragile habitats are disappearing. From faraway lands, right down to my neighborhood in Talent, OR the tragic effects of climate change affect us all on planet Earth.

This most important issue has gone ignored for far too long and our planet's population is suffering unfathomable consequences. It is time that we empower our children, the leaders of the future, with the education and the tools they need to ask the right questions, find the answers, and bring on the solutions. It is our responsibility and opportunity as parents and legislators to provide them with the education that will empower them to solve the problems that threaten our very existence.

Knowledge and understanding of the issues should be comprehensive and bridge all disciplines including language arts, sciences, mathematics, social studies, health, physical education and the arts so that we can truly tackle humanity most pressing issue.

Students in Oregon have a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of the wave of change. Students in this state not only are affected by the horrific effect of climate change and directly understand the impacts, they are also surrounded by several biomes, many different ecosystems and lots of biodiversity giving them a unique opportunity to understand the interdependence with nature.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 3365 - Comprehensive Climate Change Education in Oregon schools and be the legacy that our children deserve.

Thank you for your support of HB 3365!

Sincerely,
Giulia Longo, Talent OR