

2024-2025 YOUTH COMMISSION

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Aditi Subramaniam
Jimena (Toby) Ortega

VOTING MEMBERS:

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Alma Robinson
Claira Pearce
Claire Tagalog
Cassandra Avendano
Celeste Ruiz
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Enzo Carpio
Freya Matthiessen
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Jules Jones
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Lily Lockwood-Keil
Logan O'Halloran
Maritsa Cardoso-Bustamante
McKenzie Vo
Mirabel Kotamarti
Samiyyah Sadruddin
Sofia Lakdawalla
Sol Fuerte Hernandez
Sumair Lakdawalla

AT-LARGE MEMBERS:

Anai Beng
Mo Dantew
Sunaina Arora

Open Seat in Memory of
Jennifer Beegle

STAFF:

Andrea Marquez (City)
Erika Molina-Rodriguez (County)
Jes Phillip (City)
Jia Wu (County)



March 26, 2025

RE: Oregon HB 2359 (2025) - The Oregon SLEEP Act

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice Chair McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is McKenzie Vo. I am a commissioner on the Multnomah Youth Commission, the official youth policy body for the City of Portland and Multnomah County, and co-chair of the MYC Education Committee. I am also a junior at Cleveland High School in Portland.

Today, on behalf of our *entire* student-led team and coalition, we urge you to support House Bill 2359, the Oregon Starting Later for Educational Excellence and Progress Act, or Oregon SLEEP Act. This act would move public and charter high school start times to after 8:30am, a change which will unequivocally benefit students around Oregon.

How does the Oregon SLEEP Act serve Oregon students? Data we have observed in school districts of all sizes and backgrounds, urban and rural, that have made the switch report better attendance, higher graduation rates, fewer sports accidents, and many more benefits.

How does the Oregon SLEEP Act help school leaders? This bill is the first bill in the nation which provides centralized support through the Oregon Department of Education to assist with the change. The bill empowers the state board of education to make decisions, and a rural exemption allows rural communities to take advantage of these benefits when they're ready.

How does the Oregon SLEEP Act support teachers? Teachers will see students engage more in class, stay awake for first period, and have a healthier relationship with school. And teachers who are also parents will see their children also experience these benefits.

Lastly, how does the Oregon SLEEP Act change this state for the better? In the long term, students will get more out of their education, and models show a large economic benefit after changing start times. Additionally, communities see fewer car crashes and lower rates of teen crime.

Legislators, why wait? Let us take this opportunity to make proactive change, and invest in the long term. For students, for Oregon. We *urge* you to support the Oregon SLEEP Act.

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Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice Chair McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Maritsa Cardoso-Bustamante. I am also a commissioner on the Multnomah Youth Commission and a senior at Gresham High School, which starts at 7:35 a.m..

I would like to take this opportunity to provide my experience starting school at such an early time. Many of my peers, myself included, have a hard time waking up early to get to school on time, let alone catch the bus or eat breakfast. During first period, many of my friends aren't able to focus on what the teacher is saying, fall asleep in class, or are not able to engage because their brains haven't woken up yet.

I see a big difference between engagement during the first and second period. Many of my teachers say the same thing. I also know that our school's administration sees this difference. Recently, my school's assistant principal wrote a letter supporting the Oregon SLEEP Act because it will help schools like ours.

This is not unique to my school. Early start times affect all students regardless of zip code, background, and income. Please support this bill to support the students of Oregon.

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Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice Chair McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Enzo Carpio. I have been a commissioner on the Multnomah Youth Commission for 2 years. I am also a freshman at Reynolds High School, a school which recently changed its start time to 8:45am.

This start time allows me to get more sleep and get to school on time ready to learn. While I am a freshman, I want to mention that many of my fellow commissioners on the Multnomah Youth Commission who went to Reynolds High School before the change experienced the same things that Maritsa mentioned.

This change only started with this school year, and already there has been improvement in attendance and lower tardiness. The Reynolds School Board Chair wrote a letter supporting this bill because those benefits are real. And while Reynolds has taken the initiative, many other schools and districts around Oregon need support to make the move. The Oregon SLEEP Act does just that. By providing centralized state support and funds, we know that every district can succeed and reap these benefits. Thank you, and I urge you to support the Oregon SLEEP Act.

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Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice Chair McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Alvin Chan. I am an advisor to the Multnomah Youth Commission, working with our student-led team on House Bill 2359, the Oregon SLEEP Act. Prior to this role, I served on the commission for six years, two of those years as Co-Chair of the commission. I was born and raised in Oregon, and attended Cleveland High School in Portland, graduating in 2024.

I will be the last person to speak on behalf of the coalition of supporters at today's meeting, so I want to take this opportunity to highlight this final, very important aspect of the Oregon SLEEP Act. And it is a simple one: this bill was crafted with input from stakeholders and experts representing all ends of the education system, from teachers to parents, from principals to boards, from legislators to physicians. And in that process, we centered the experience and needs of students, in line with both science and practical implications. From this intensive engagement, we have crafted a first-of-its-kind bill that makes proactive and productive change.

In the upcoming days, you will hear or read arguments about local control, or this bill being an unfunded mandate, or that start times build maturity. Speakers before me addressed those concerns, and now you know they are unfounded and based in misinformation. When you consider those arguments, as the voices of those students who spoke before me and the written words of students you will read later ring in your head, ask yourself this question: "Why not take bold action now to support the wellbeing of students?"

Before I conclude, I would like to recognize the students on the team supporting the Oregon SLEEP Act. You heard from some of them today or at past hearings, and some of them unfortunately could not be with us here today in-person. However, I want to take this moment to honor all of them. These young people dedicate their time, on a voluntary basis, to drive this bill forward. They write emails, talk to people around their schools, engage with stakeholders, do mountains of research, and a lot more I can't list. This, everyone, is the finest in civic engagement. This is maturity. This, representatives, is Oregon's future.

In Oregon, we pride our education system as putting students first. Representatives, if any reform to our education system is student-first, it is this bill. We have a chance to build something great in Oregon—something unprecedented in this country—and it's built with the hands and hearts of Oregon students, your constituents. Representatives, we urge you to join us in this fight for and *with* all Oregon students.

On behalf of the team at the Multnomah Youth Commission and the large coalition of supporters of the Oregon SLEEP Act, thank you for the privilege of your time, and I look forward to any questions you may have.