

Submitter: Maximus Herrera

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3006

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Fragala, Vice-Chair Harbick and Members of the House Committee on Education and Workforce Development,

My name is Maximus Herrera, and I am submitting testimony today in my own personal capacity in strong support for HB 3006.

As a queer latino community member who grew up in Lake Oswego, the quality and value of my education was heavily impacted by the lack of diversity and cultural awareness in my school district.

From swastikas drawn in the school bathroom, to confederate flags brought to classrooms, there was an abundance of hateful stuff intended to instill fear in our small POC population that school educators and staff were not prepared or equipped to deal with.

Not only were they unprepared to deal with it, but some staff openly mocked and questioned why our school was making efforts to be more inclusive to minorities through efforts like Equity Council assemblies.

This led to many POC students, including myself and my close friends, to have to deal with the onslaught of racial attacks and threats on our own with no guidance from faculty. The same was also true for the queer community at our school, which suffered in a lot of the same ways, with some staff being particularly hostile to students. This took a severe toll on our mental well-being and our ability to succeed academically or even feel safe going to school.

And when my grades eventually dropped due to lack of support and understanding from the staff, it became increasingly difficult to receive support from anyone. This included my school counselor who suggested that perhaps my dream of pursuing a higher education just wasn't in the cards for me.

But despite the lack of support, and the onslaught of hatred and misunderstanding from students and staff alike, I was still able to graduate in 2019 thanks to the small handful of school staff that did care.

These folks had training and backgrounds with diverse communities, and are the

reason that I was able to graduate at all. I received support and guidance from these staff that I received nowhere else in the school, and they were able to understand my struggles and give me strategies and support for my success.

Without these two staff members helping me out in my Junior and Senior year of high school, I would have never made it past the finish line. And that is why I wholeheartedly support HB 3006 in its amended form.

As I understand it, this legislation would direct \$5 million to help schools recruit, hire, and support new teachers and administrators who specifically bring lived experience working with diverse populations.

This investment means that students like me would have more staff that knew how to support me and cared about my long-term success. It would improve student outcomes, build trust in our school system, and create a more robust learning environment for ALL Oregonians.

Thank you for listening to my story, and I humbly implore you to consider and PASS HB 3006.

Thank you.