

Submitter: Vanessa Petroj
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5525

As the Director of the Writing Center at Western Oregon University, I have the privilege of working closely with students from diverse backgrounds—many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Their stories reaffirm what I believe deeply: public education is not only a pathway to opportunity, but a foundation of a just and equitable society.

Every day, I witness the transformative power of accessible education. Students arrive with unique challenges, strengths, and voices. Through public education, they develop the skills, confidence, and critical thinking necessary to thrive—not only in the classroom, but in their communities and future careers. The Writing Center is just one space where that growth becomes visible: when a student masters a difficult assignment, learns to advocate for themselves through writing, or begins to see their own ideas as valuable contributions to academic conversations.

Public education ensures that learning is not a privilege for the few, but a right for all. It is a promise we make to every student—that no matter their zip code, background, or income, they deserve the chance to learn, grow, and succeed. That's why I will always stand in strong support of public education.