

Submitter:

Patricia McCarty

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4112

Respected Members of our Legislative Body, February 9, 2026

I am a retired teacher. I have had an unusually varied collection of places of employment. I once taught long-term at Parkrose Middle school for a collection of long-term substitute jobs. I have never gone with a group to outdoor school, but two years in a row, I was teaching a part of the sixth grade team when the classes went and returned to school. I would say that the experience was wonderful for the students! They went away from the school environment, which was pretty adversarial, and returned as a group of friends. They told me about things they learned there with great enthusiasm. Some were most impressed by the songs they sang, and they would sometimes be singing them together when they had recess for a long time later. Some told me they learned to correctly set a table for a meal - they had never been shown that skill before. Some told me about plants and fungi they learned to identify and they would look for such things outside around our building. Some told me about things they learned about their teachers and they developed a deeper fondness bonding with those teachers. I know that a lot of Oregon is rural, and that some of what Outdoor School does for the rural populations is not the same as what it does for the metropolitan populations, but for these inner city students, it is a life changing experience.

I understand the need to keep budgets. When the money is tight, something has to go. I'm inclined to suggest that there might be a way to keep this one though... If you can find a way, I think it is beneficial. (Not at the cost of all the arts programs, or academics, but I appreciate this attempt to return it to the lives of our students.)

Thank you.

Patricia McCarty