

Chair Hudson, Vice-chairs McIntire and Dobson, Members of the Committee,

My name is Daniel Prince. I live in Corbett and I was a chief petitioner for Ballot Measure 99, Outdoor School for All, which voters overwhelmingly passed in 2016.

I am also a retired teacher and school administrator with a 30-year career in public education. I am also a parent of children who went to Outdoor School and the spouse of a teacher who brought her 6th grade students to Outdoor School (and got her inspiration to be a teacher when she attended Outdoor School in the 6th grade).

Thank you for the chance to express my support for HB 4112 to restore \$6 million to the Outdoor School fund. Currently more than half of the members of the Legislature are co-sponsors of this bill. And many of you are co-sponsors as well. Thank you! Like Oregonians at large, a majority of legislators support restoration of full funding for Outdoor School.

Outdoor School is a smart, time-tested, effective science education program. Over its 60-year history in Oregon, it has been demonstrated to teach science literacy, inspire students to careers in education, natural resources, science, outdoor recreation, and countless other fields.

Outdoor School is a bright spot in K-12 education. Years of comprehensive research and evaluation have shown that key outcomes for school success are stronger at Outdoor School than back in the classroom. Students are more engaged in learning; they have a stronger sense of belonging; they have a stronger sense of identity as a science learner; they learn more overall; they enjoy learning more.

In spite of the efforts of dedicated teachers and administrators, Oregon schools are experiencing a crisis of chronic absenteeism. Engagement, enjoyment, and belonging all contribute to stronger attendance at school.

Often in education we look to exemplars of excellence for inspiration. Too often, those exemplars are isolated cases. Not Outdoor School. Outdoor School is a bright spot that, because of full funding from Measure 99, has been brought fully to scale in Oregon. It is in every county and almost every school district.

It was a mistake to cut funding to a program that works so well in so many settings at a statewide scale. With the passage of HB 4112, we will again be investing in success, not stifling it.

The voters of Oregon were right—Outdoor School is good for kids and good for Oregon. Most of Oregon's Legislators are right—Outdoor School should be fully funded. Please pass HB 4112 and restore funding to Outdoor School.