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STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB 513 - CIVICS EDUCATION BILL

Students of color lead a broad coalition of diverse advocates in asking the Oregon Legislature to ensure all Oregon high school students receive one semester of dedicated civics education

Salem, Oregon — This Wednesday, numerous Oregonian elected officials, students, educators, business, community and civic leaders testified in favor the *Civics Education Act* (SB 513/HB 2299). The bipartisan legislation was sponsored by Representative Paul Evans (D-Monmouth) and Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod (R-Stayton) in the Senate.

This Act ensures that every Oregon student will receive one semester of civics education before they graduate. The Oregon Department of Education provides standards for civics and government education. However, without designated and focused class time, that content is often relegated in disparate fashion to other social studies courses. This bill will allow teachers to provide a robust, dedicated civics course that will ensure all students receive a strong grounding in the established civic standards.

[Video testimony](#) in support of SB 513 included:

- Anahi Sanchez Marcial - Student, Parkrose High School, Portland: “Because of civics education, I am aware of my individual rights and the impact that I can have in our democracy. I see my right to vote, as guaranteed by the Constitution, as a blessing and I am encouraged to not only follow the issues impacting our nation, but will be an active participant in shaping those issues.”
- Sydney Wilkins – Student, Sisters High School: “I’m from a very small town in Central Oregon with a population of just over 2,000. I’m incredibly lucky to have a fantastic teacher who’s passionate enough to have created the civics courses I’ve taken, but I’m very conscious that without that single teacher, I would not have received an equal or even similar education. I believe that every Oregon student, regardless of the state of their school district’s funding, deserves an equal opportunity to have the same type of exposure to civics and government instructions as I have.”
- Isabela Villarreal - Policy & Communications Manager, Next Up: “We envision young people boldly leading the state forward, our democracy being inclusive and accessible, and our communities that are strong and resilient. In order for this vision to become a reality, a key aspect is ensuring that young people are equipped with the civic knowledge, skills and dispositions to be able to address the issues in their communities.”
- Representative Paul Evans (D- Monmouth): “We are either serious about (civics education) and pass this legislation or we are going to continue to kick the can down the road and we are going to continue to see a public that does not know how to vote for their own self-interest because they don’t understand how government works.”

Numerous groups and individuals also submitted written testimony in support of SB 513, including a letter from over 250 leading Oregon businesses and organizations, government officials, college and university faculty, and concerned citizens.

“The urgent support we are seeing for the Civics Education Act is broad and diverse,” said Erin Esparza, Executive Director of the Classroom Law Project. “Oregon is one of only 11 states that do not currently require a civics education class for graduation. The time is now to do better by our students, our state, and our democracy.”

In a separate letter of support for SB 513, 125 educators from across the state spoke to the value of, and urgent need for civics education.

“Oregon teachers support this bill because we know that civics instruction prepares students for their imminent participation as voters, as working adults, and as citizens in their communities,” said Susan Casey, a social studies teacher at Eagle Point High School. “There is inequity in civics education where some students receive dedicated focus on the subject while others receive limited instruction scattered across multiple social science classes. This inequity has real implications for our students and our society and it must be addressed.”

More information about The Civics Education Act can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/3bywMUU>

The stakeholder letter in support of SB 513 with over 250 signers can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/2N5Pjyt>

The educator letter in support of SB 513 with 125 signers can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/2Oojod8>

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