

State Representative
Cliff Bentz
House District 60

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Vale High School Students Weigh In On Legislative Issues

SALEM –On Wednesday, Representative Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario) met via video conference with local students from Vale High School to discuss legislative matters and in particular, House Bill 2654. The video conference culminated a session-long effort, initiated by Rep. Bentz, to engage District 60 high school students in the legislative process.

With direction from Mr. Dave Eyler (Vale High School teacher) and Rep. Bentz’s legislative intern, Laurel Welborn, 12th grade students in the Law Related Education course at Vale High School, researched the legal and practical implications of House Bill 2654. This bill restricts an employer’s ability to compel access to social media accounts or to make employer access or control of these media a condition of employment.

Two of Mr. Eyler’s students, Taylor Jacobs and Daphne Mattos, debated the bill in front of their class, Rep. Bentz, and two members of Rep. Bentz’s staff. Mr. Jacobs argued in support of the bill, noting the “need for distinction between personal life and professional life, and the privacy concerns raised with unlimited employer access.” He described the currently available means of obtaining relevant employee information and the potential for unlawful employment practices should these requirements stand. Ms. Mattos argued in opposition to the bill, noting that increased access could improve workplace conditions and provide a safer work environment.

“High school students provide a unique and very important perspective,” Rep. Bentz stated. “Providing them an opportunity to voice their opinions helps me better understand their interests and what they want for Oregon’s future. Ms. Welborn’s involvement helped make this effort a success and I look forward to working with more District 60 students in the future.”

Ms. Mattos and Mr. Jacobs will graduate from Vale High School this spring. Ms. Mattos will attend Oregon State University in the fall, where she plans to study bio-chemistry and pursue a career in pharmacy. Mr. Jacobs will attend the University of California at Berkeley in the fall, where he plans to study law.

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