



# STATEMENT

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

For Immediate Release  
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### **House Majority Leader Barbara Smith Warner Condemns Actions by Newberg School Board Leadership to Revoke Bipartisan Anti-Racist Policy Originally Chief-Sponsored by Republicans**

SALEM, OR -- Today House Majority Leader [Barbara Smith Warner](#) makes the following statement in response to the Newberg School Board's pending vote and attempt to overturn the anti-racist [Every Student Belongs](#) policy, originally [chief-sponsored by Republicans](#), and ban LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter symbols in schools:

"The Newberg School Board's attempt to overturn the Every Student Belongs policy is dangerous and wrong, and must not be allowed to go unchallenged. Director Brian Shannon and Chairman Dave Brown, and any other board members who support this misguided effort, are putting our students' ability to safely and effectively learn in the classroom at risk.

"Across the country and right here in Oregon, we are seeing more attempts to whitewash our history and overturn antiracist policies, like Every Student Belongs, which were implemented to ensure students can feel safe and thrive in the classroom, no matter their perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin. The policy they seek to stifle further prohibits the use of hate symbols, including the swastika, Confederate flag and noose.

"It was also [reported](#) that Director Shannon added to the board's agenda banning the use of Black Lives Matter signage and LGBTQ+ Pride flags from school buildings. These are emblems used by historically oppressed communities to create a safe space for students regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation. The board's attempt to ban these symbols shows how great the need still is to better understand our history, not erase it.

"What the school board is doing is reckless, prioritizing bigoted and partisan politics over our children's wellbeing and ability to succeed in and outside of the classroom. As the Legislative Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Caucus previously stated, Every Student Belongs was implemented with the intent of creating a competitive workforce that adequately equips our students with the tools and skills to work in an increasingly diversified job market and global economy.

"Economics aside, there is a moral obligation for community, state and national leaders to foster an equitable education system that protects students' emotional and physical wellbeing. What the [data shows](#) is that students of color experience racism in the classroom starting at a young age, a traumatizing event that impacts a student's ability to perform and succeed. In fact, BIPOC students are [3.8 times more likely](#) to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than white students. There is still so much to be done to truly provide justice for all, and policies like Every Student Belongs are critical to getting to that long-overdue goal.

"When I joined the Legislature in 2014, I did so with the goal of breaking down systemic barriers and fighting for equity in our education system. I stand by that commitment to all of our students, and I promise to hold accountable any districts or school boards that attempt to prioritize bigotry over student success."

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