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OREGON SENATE REPUBLICANS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2021

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GOP Authored Civics Education Bill Will Promote Healthy Democratic Participation

SB 513 gives students foundations in political processes and institutions

SALEM, Ore. — The Senate approved [Senate Bill 513](#) today, which would require Oregon high school students to take a semester of civics education before graduating. While the Oregon Department of Education already has standards for civics and government courses, SB 513 would carve out dedicated class time to focus on the principles of America's and Oregon's political institutions.

“This is an important and timely piece of legislation,” said Senate Republican Leader, Fred Girod (R-Lyons). “The past year has shown how government decision-making can deeply impact lives and livelihoods – for better or for worse. As kids return to school, it's important they understand the ins and outs of how decisions get made and how they can be involved. This is a good, bipartisan bill that I urge our colleagues in the House to pass.”

SB 513 has broad support from teachers, leading Oregon businesses and organizations, government officials, college and university faculty, and concerned citizens nearly 600 of whom have signed letters calling for its passage.

“The broad, diverse support we are seeing for the Civics Education Act is an acknowledgment of the importance of giving young Oregonians the foundations they need to participate in our democracy,” said Erin Esparza, Executive Director of the Classroom Law Project, a non-profit organization committed to preparing Oregon students to become engaged and involved participants in the democratic process. “We are living in a time where nearly one-third of Americans are unable to name any branches of government. Yet, Oregon is one of only 11 states that do not currently require a civics education class for graduation. It's time to do better by our students, our state, and our democracy.”

SB 513 passed by a 25-3 vote and now heads to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

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