



To: House Committee on Education

From:

Date: March 21st 2017

Re: Support for House Bill 2693

Chair Doherty and committee members,

By investing in transportation access you are investing in Oregon's youth. Which is why Momentum Alliance -a youth-led social justice nonprofit based in Portland, Oregon, respectfully urges your support for House Bill 2693. We connect underrepresented youth with diverse leadership and advocacy opportunities. Our network comprises of youth from the Portland Metro region, as well as youth from Newberg, Scappoose, Woodburn and Salem.

House Bill 2693 establishes a program under which the Department of Education awards grants to school districts for percentage of certain student transportation costs. We are thrilled about this bill and the positive impact it will have on Oregon's youth, families, and education system. We know that transportation options and costs greatly impacts the wellbeing and future of Oregon's youth. We know that many Oregon youth are caretakers and breadwinners in their families. We know that in order to access employment, professional development, and leadership development opportunities, youth need affordable access to transportation.

We have seen youth miss out on a great deal of opportunities because they did not have affordable and reliable access to transportation. We have seen how parents stress over transporting their kids to school and extracurricular activities. We have seen educators stress over chronic tardiness and absenteeism. HB 2693 will help address these issues.

As one of our youth organizers, Fatmah Worfeley, age 19 puts it: "I grew up with both my parents worked full time, and throughout the years my dad would take on side jobs to make ends meet. I rely solely on public transportation to get to school and my jobs. Having bus fare means having access to money consistently, which was never the case. When I didn't have access to money, I couldn't take the bus, which meant I had to miss school, cancel meetings, and doctor appointments. My hopes are that with this statewide bus pass bill, it will provide accessible opportunities for all youth to pursue their education and opportunities to be successful."

Thank you,

Emily Lai & Fatmah Worfeley on behalf of Momentum Alliance