

## LTC (ret) Harold Stetson

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4 April 2017

Senator Lewis Fredrick; /

Senate committee

Measure 98

Dear Senator Lewis Fredrick; / ,

I am writing to state my support for Measure 98 and my belief that the people of Oregon expect full support of the bill, as it was written. I am a native Oregonian and I tell people I live here by choice--not because I don't know any better. I have visited places like Colombia and Iraq where I served, and was in the line of fire more than once. As an Oregon native, a land owner, a happily married man to my wife of 46 years, a veteran, and a current CTE teacher at Silverton High School, I can offer a unique perspective.

I consider Governor Ted Kulongoski a friend. I asked him to come to a school car show a little less than a year ago. He looked at my program and realized it was exactly what Measure 98 was all about. In my classroom, we work on mechanical things, mainly cars and lawnmowers, but the program is about so much more. We teach the students good work ethic and self-respect. I realized after my first year of teaching that Mechanical Technology, and CTE in general, is as much about self-esteem as it is mechanics. It has taken time to realize that we not only teach these kids skills they can use for their entire lives, but we also give some students a reason to come to school. National and state research has shown that schools with CTE programs have a much higher graduation rate than schools that do not. In our case, Silverton has an 8 percent graduation rate, nearly 15 percent higher than the state average, it also has strong CTE offerings. Nearby, Molalla has a 73 percent graduation rate and little to no CTE offerings.

My program has three scholarships that require recipients to be in my class to receive the funding. I encourage students to go on to college, but if that is not their desired path, I still

encourage them to gain college credit while enrolled in high school. Students are exposed to the rigor of college course work, and can apply that credit later in life if they decide to pursue further education. I believe my job as a CTE teacher is to prepare these kids to succeed after high school—whether that path leads them to college or a career. Full funding of Measure 98 would mean we have money to buy technology and equipment to meet the needs of the 21st century. I am one of the fortunate CTE teachers that has had sustainable program funding. I have partnered with the local business community to buy additional equipment and our students earn money to buy things like our new tire machine. Fully funding Measure 98 allows districts to enhance programs like mine, and gives other districts the opportunity to build a CTE program from scratch. I believe that CTE gives students something to look forward to after high school, and for many, gives them a reason to show up to school every day. In the Silverton school district, we have a much higher graduation rate because of the various dropout prevention strategies in place, such as CTE programs and early college/dual credit offerings. Measure 98 provides the flexibility that districts need to succeed, and prioritizes funding for programs that are proven to improve graduation rates.

As a CTE teacher on the front lines, this measure makes sense. To meddle with the critical components of Measure 98 is unacceptable. The amendments that Senator Fredrick is proposing is a direct insult to Oregon voters. I am from rural Oregon; I have a 101-acre farm. I also teach in rural Oregon. We are behind this measure in its original text, and we voted to have it fully funded and implemented. When I talk with my community and tell them that our legislators are trying to gut the measure, water it down, carve out funds for other projects, and even worse, to fund half of it or none at all-- their response is always, "they can't do that". Unfortunately, I assure them it can be done. Their response is this: There will be consequences for disobeying the will of the voter. Legislators: You work for us, and this is unacceptable. I know that above all you value being re-elected. We hold the power, and we are watching. I urge you to fully fund Measure 98, and keep the language of the measure intact. Senate Education Committee: Our kids are counting on you. Please oppose the amendments that Senator Fredrick is proposing.

Sincerely,

LTC (ret) Harold Stetson

