

Oregon PTA Draft Resolution

MAKING OREGON SCHOOLS EARTHQUAKE-SAFE

WHEREAS The third Purpose of PTA is “to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth;” and

WHEREAS Oregon faces seismic hazards of great severity, including subduction zone earthquakes capable of causing mass casualties, extensive physical damage, and major disruption of the state’s economy; and

WHEREAS Strong earthquakes can endanger the structural integrity and cause the collapse of buildings constructed before Oregon adopted comprehensive seismic building codes in 1994, including a large majority of public schools in the state; and

WHEREAS Oregon’s Department of Geology and Mineral Industries surveyed 2,185 K-12 public education buildings in 170 school districts and ESDs representing 97% of public school enrollment, and rated 1,108 of these buildings at “high” or ”very high” risk of collapse in a strong earthquake; and

WHEREAS Over 300,000 Oregon children and youth are enrolled in schools rated “high” or “very high” risk of collapse in a strong earthquake; and

WHEREAS Oregon voters amended the State’s Constitution in 2002 to make the seismic rehabilitation of public education buildings an appropriate purpose for general obligation borrowing; and

WHEREAS The Oregon Legislature established the Seismic Rehabilitation Grants Program (the “Courtney Grants”) to enable school districts and ESDs to fund seismic retrofit and upgrade projects; and

WHEREAS The Legislature authorized \$30 million for a pilot round of Courtney Grants for seismic upgrades during the 2009-2011 biennium; and

WHEREAS The \$15 million disbursed in the pilot round of Courtney grants in 2010 included \$5.6 million in grants to twelve K-12 schools in seven districts, marking the beginning of the state’s effort to fulfill its legal mandate of earthquake safety in Oregon schools (ORS 455.400); now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Oregon PTA urge its units, councils, and districts to seek immediate action by school districts to apply cost-effective mitigation to schools and school buildings known to be at risk of collapse, on a risk-prioritized basis; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Oregon PTA urge its units, councils, and districts to seek immediate action by school districts to apply for Courtney Grants to achieve this purpose; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Oregon PTA urge the Legislature to authorize funding for the Courtney Grants program at the levels recommended by the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission in each biennium until a seismic life-safety standard can be met in every Oregon school; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Oregon PTA urge the Legislature to advance seismic resilience and protect Oregon's children and youth through appropriate policies to evaluate and mitigate this significant hazard to Oregon schools.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

To come.

Oregon PTA