

SB0941 Written Testimony- Andrea Horrocks M.A.T.

IN SUPPORT OF: SB0941 – Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Schools – Alterations

Public Hearing in Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

On Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 1:30 PM

Andrea Horrocks highly supports SB0941 - Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Schools – Alterations.

Dear Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Andrea Horrocks and I am writing you to urge your support for SB0941. I have been a Secondary Teacher here in the state of Maryland for almost 14 years. I have a master's degree and teaching certifications in Maryland, Texas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Oregon. I currently teach AP US History and standard US History, with certifications in AP US History and AP Psychology. Previous teaching experience includes Social Studies for grades 6-8, US History, World History, Economics, Psychology and Middle School Science.

My career with Pearson started as a teacher in a Connections Academy virtual school pilot program 13 ½ years ago with Baltimore County Public Schools home-schooled students, called "BCVIP." **During this program I saw quickly that virtual learning might not be for every student, but EVERY student should have the option. It was a life-saver for the students we taught in the BCVIP program, just as it has been for the many students I've subsequently taught across the United States.** The teachers and families involved in the BCVIP pilot were very disappointed when the pilot programs closed.

In my career with Pearson I have taught:

- Olympic athletes
- Actors
- Professional athletes (6-8 hours of practice each day)
- Students who were gifted in one or two subject, and on grade level for the rest
- Students living in remote places of the country who had no access to AP courses
- Students overseas
- Students with severe social anxiety or bullying history
- Home and hospital students
- Students with IEPs and 504 plans

Our high-quality virtual learning program has made a difference in the lives of these students.

I've taught AP US History for 12 years, and the course is excellent. Students are able to learn both asynchronously and synchronously. In my weekly LiveLessons, I am able to reinforce the skills needed to write very specific College Board Essays and more, to ensure student success. This course is taught completely virtually, and my students routinely perform quite well, with most receiving 3's, 4's and 5's.

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Virtual learning should be of the highest quality, leveraging the latest distance learning research and best practices. From what I've seen during the pandemic, states and school districts have had to "build the plane in flight." Our students deserve better.

Like many other states, our state should be able to offer students and families state-wide virtual public-school options. If we are able to offer these options, students can choose the education model that works best for them, in programs that meet state standards.

Pearson Online & Blended Learning recommends a Favorable Committee report on SB0941.

Thank you,

Andrea Horrocks

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