

Good Afternoon

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on senate bill 156.

This evening, I want to talk about something that has potential to change lives on a generational level. This is even more relevant for young people growing up in an ever evolving and complex world. That thing is called Success Sequencing. It is a very simple but potent concept: first finish high school, next get a full-time job, then marry your forever help mate before having your children together. We all know the research that will have or has been repeated time and time again that following this sequence significantly reduces the chances of poverty and increases the likelihood of a stable, fulfilling life.

What some may fail to realize is the parallels or divergence of their own lives and those around them as they relate to Success Sequencing. For example, in my own life I got a little out of order. I did graduate first, but I got married before I knew what I wanted to do with my life. Then I got into a decent full-time job, and we had our first child all while my wife tried to complete college and work part time. Now I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt the order we achieved our milestones significantly increased the difficulty of our lives. I remember working seven 12-hour days on night shift to pay bills and take care of our family. While my wife would study 4 hours a day locked in a room studying for classes. All while I tried to wipe Mr. Sandman out of my eyes on 4 hours of sleep so I could take care of our daughter so we could all achieve our goals. Yes, we did end up achieving our goals but, if we would have been taught the importance of the success sequencing, we would not have had to live in low-income apartments with neighbors looking for their drugs in the yard. We would not have been looking out for needles on the lawn while my daughter of only 3, wanted to play outside. We would not have had to worry about our apartments catching on fire because it seemed like a meth lab burst into flames at least once a year. I get it, it's sometimes human nature that we try to convince ourselves well I had to go through it, and I am fine so they can do it too. I call nonsense. Who wants to see someone struggle? Let alone struggle the same way we did when we can teach them a better way.

Here is the issue- we don't teach that better way in schools. We prepare our students academically. Things like math, science, history- all essential but how many students leave high school knowing how to build a stable adult life? If we can offer education on financial literacy or career readiness, why not offer a roadmap that shows how personal decisions, made in a certain order, can protect against long- term hardship. Imagine if every teenager understood not just the risks, but the strategies that work. Success sequencing isn't about controlling or moralizing choice. It's about providing students with knowledge. With that knowledge Studies have shown that 95% of young adults who follow success sequencing avoid poverty. That is not luck that's a pattern worth sharing. Let's teach success sequencing in our schools as a powerful tool for building toward their goals and dreams. The choice is still theirs and the knowledge should be too.

Thank you all again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 156.