



The National Organization of Agriculture Students



OAKLAND FFA
P.O. Box 390
Oakland, Oregon 97462

March 1, 2017

To Senate Education Committee;

I am writing this letter to urge you to support Senate Bill 230. I am an Agricultural Science & Technology Teacher and FFA Advisor at Oakland High School, in Oakland, Oregon. I have taught for 15 years, 12 in Southern Oregon at Phoenix High School. During my time teaching, I have seen countless students enter my classroom without direction, and leave my program with career goals and leadership experience. Because of the three-circle model of Classroom, SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) and FFA, these students gain a very well-rounded education. In the classroom, they are exposed to hands-on skills, and technology to prepare them for agricultural careers. SAE's give them experiential "practice", by either developing an entrepreneurship experience, or working for another business in a placement project. Finally, through FFA, they are exposed to leadership opportunities. I have students enter my classroom each year, that are terrified of speaking. By the time they graduate, they are able to give eight minute speeches, present in front of groups, and carry themselves with poise and confidence as they speak to civic organizations.

I believe in Ag-Education, and FFA, because I have seen how much these students are changed by this program. When a student comes back after graduation, and thanks me for exposing them to opportunities in agriculture that they never knew even existed, I know I am changing the world. I can't think of another career that is so rewarding. As agricultural teachers, we are responsible for preparing the next generation that will help curb the future food shortage crisis. Since the Smith-Hughes Act, 100 years ago, vocational agriculture has prepared students for careers in agricultural education. With more than 9 billion people projected to be on the planet by the year 2050, and less then 2% of people in production agriculture, tomorrow's leaders will need to devise methods to grow more food then we've ever grown before.

One of the biggest issues facing Ag-Education, is the shortage of qualified teachers. The burnout rate of agricultural teachers is very high, due to the amount of extra responsibilities. This SB 230 will relieve much of the stress for agricultural teachers, by providing more support for State Staff and the State Office, and put energy where it is most needed, focused at student growth. It will allow the Oregon FFA Association to continue growing and improving, to better serve our FFA members and Agricultural Education students.

Thank you for considering this bill. If you have any further questions for me, I can be reached at 541-944-4212, or rachel.kostman@oakland.k12.or.us.

Sincerely,

Rachel B. Kostman

Oakland Agricultural Science and Technology
Oakland FFA

The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives by developing their mission **for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.**