



Testimony of Upstream Public Health

To: House Education Committee
Re: In support of HB 2652
Date: February 13, 2017

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kasandra Griffin and I work for Upstream Public Health. We are a statewide organization that works to ensure that all Oregonians have equal access to good health. Specifically, we focus on the social determinants of health – factors such as address, race, and income, which are responsible for unfair and avoidable differences in health status. We work on policies to close those gaps. Oregon *needs* the next generation of kids to be healthy and strong so that they can be our future business leaders, doctors, teachers, nurses, innovators, and politicians.

We have specifically been working on the issue of school food for over a decade. We believe that Healthy Kids Learn Better (I even chair a coalition with that name!), and we believe that it is our public duty to ensure that all of Oregon's kids have enough (and *good* enough) food in their bellies to focus on learning in school. Kids cannot be expected to sit still and focus if they are hungry.

The Community Eligibility Provision is an effective program for ensuring that *all* hungry kids have access to free school breakfast and lunch, without the stigma or hassle of applications and paperwork. It is better for the kids and also better for the schools, who are able to spend their meal energy *making and promoting good food*, rather than checking kids in by name and payment code. Data shows that this program really is successful at drastically expanding participation in school meals.

We support this effort to expand state funding for the Community Eligibility Provision, to ensure that we are giving all Oregon kids the nutrition tools that they need to succeed in their education and in life.

Thank you for your service and your attention to this matter.

Kasandra Griffin
Policy Manager, Food and School Health