

TESTIMONY FROM HOLLY LEVOW
BUSINESS OWNER, MEMBER OF BUSINESS FOR A BETTER PORTLAND
April 19, 2019

Good evening Co-Chair Roblan, Co-Chair Smith Warner and members of the Committee. My name is Holly Levow and I am a small business owner of a women's retail boutique, Foundation, in Portland. I have also had the honor of volunteering with Latino Network for the last 5 years through Social Venture Partners Portland working on capacity building and specifically to scale their amazing and vital culturally specific early childhood education program, Juntos Aprendemos.

I am testifying in front of you again tonight in support of the Student Success Act, and I'm not alone. Thanks to your tireless work and the inclusive, transparent process this committee has undertaken to address the crisis facing Oregon schools, a growing number of businesses are raising their voices to say, "enough is enough."

It's time to pass the Student Success Act.

All businesses - small, mid-sized and the largest multinational corporations - have a responsibility to engage and invest in the economic prosperity of our community. I believe there is growing momentum among business leaders to support this proposal because every one of us recognize the need and the value in investing in Oregon schools.

Today in Oregon, low-income students and black, brown, immigrant and refugee students face a significant opportunity gap. One in three students don't graduate high school within four years. Additionally, 174,000 Oregon kids are considered food insecure.

The Student Success Act would make historic investments in our schools and would be game-changing for an entire generation of students. With its passage, we can increase funding and create targeted success plans for more students, helping them to graduate on time. And, schools can finally provide greater access to free and healthy meals that make learning possible.

As a mother and engaged community member I emphatically support this bill. And as a business owner, I know this is the right proposal to accomplish much-needed and long overdue investments. We cannot wait any longer. The time is now! Thank you for your action on this important initiative.