

Hello, my name is Giovanna and I would like to share my support of HB2737, the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Tax Relief Bill, which would provide an income tax exemption for AmeriCorps members who are using their Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

As a private citizen of Oregon with a personal connection to service as AmeriCorps Member Alumni, and now as a recruiter of AmeriCorps members professionally and I have experienced, and continue to see the essential impact AmeriCorps has in our communities and in the lives of those who serve.

AmeriCorps members and alumni serve for 1-2 years to benefit their communities in the state of Oregon by playing critical roles in meeting growing needs including tutoring and mentoring children, revitalizing communities through the leveraging of countless volunteers, improving public safety, and supporting communities during disaster, such as the recent wildfires and the pandemic.

A huge benefit of completing service in AmeriCorps is the opportunity to expand your education or to repay student loans through the use of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (\$6,345 for full-time members). Currently, the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is taxed as regular income. This can cause financial hardship for many AmeriCorps members as well as a delay on plans to seek higher education.

Many universities and colleges in Oregon receive the benefits of the Segal Education Award. Over 20,000 people have served in Oregon since 1994. More than \$33M of earned awards in Oregon have gone back to educational and financial partners around the state.

HB2737 will:

- Eliminate state taxation on the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award;
- Allow AmeriCorps alumni who are unable to use the full value of the award because it is taxed, use the full value to attain career and education goals.
- Attract more people to service in Oregon because of the increased value of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- Ensure that the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is treated like the Pell Grant and the G.I. Bill, two very similar U.S. educational awards.

AmeriCorps is a pathway to education and employment in Oregon. I urge you to support the AmeriCorps members who are making such a positive change in this community and help clear a pathway to educational and economic opportunity for those who serve.

Thank you for your time,
Giovanna DiFalco
AmeriCorps Alum 2015-2016