

Joint Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Isabelle James, Vice President of the North Clackamas FFA chapter and member of the Oregon FFA. I urge your continuing support of HB 2444. It is able to help our organization implement numerous programs and allowed us to experience the State Convention for free.

In the FFA, we have many different Career and Leadership Development Events. One of which is the Parliamentary Procedure competition. In this competition, we hold a mock chapter meeting and demonstrate our understanding of Parliamentary Procedure through making motions and debating. This event is formatted to be in-person, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had to be converted into a virtual competition. It was difficult to adapt to this change because all of the typical technology problems seemed to be exasperated. Luckily, HB 2444 was able to provide funding for high-quality virtual programs so the Parliamentary Procedure competition, as well as all others, were still able to happen and were able to run smoothly. I know that I learned more about Parliamentary Procedure this year than ever before. Our North Clackamas team was able to win first place in the District competition, then at Sectionals, and eventually, we won first place at the State competition. Later this year, our team will represent Oregon in the National competition, and I know that we do very well thanks to the funding from HB 2444.

Another highlight of an FFA member's experiences are the conventions we are able to attend. We create connections with individuals that may be in a different school, county, or state than us. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we simply could not have an in-person convention. Thankfully, our Oregon FFA State Officers were able to put on an excellent State Convention, complete with sessions, keynote speakers, workshops, and more. I heard inspiring addresses that continue to motivate me to become a better person and stay true to myself. I also learned more about what it means to serve my community and this country as an upstanding and useful citizen. It took a lot of money to be able to put this high-quality convention together, and the funds from HB 2444 paid for this convention so everyone could attend it for free. I've heard from other FFA members who attended this State Convention for the first time that it moved and encouraged them, and I couldn't agree more.

The FFA's mission statement is to make a "positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education." The money from HB 2444 ensured that we Oregon FFA members could not only meet this goal, but exceed it--even during a global pandemic. I am excited to see what we can accomplish with this bill in the future.

Respectfully,
Isabelle James, Oregon FFA Member