

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Wright, and Members of the Committee:

As a high school sophomore in Vida, I am writing to express my strong support for the bill that seeks to improve the wages of school district employees in Oregon. The bill requires school districts to pay a minimum wage of 10% more than the state minimum wage for classified school employees and 15% more for those who support students with individualized education programs or special education. It also requires certified educators to receive a minimum salary of \$60,000 per year and \$63,000 per year if they work with students with individualized education programs or special education.

This bill is crucial in ensuring that the hardworking and dedicated employees who play a crucial role in shaping the future of our students receive the recognition and compensation they deserve. These employees play an essential role in providing students with the support and education they need to succeed. It is imperative that they receive a fair and livable wage so that they can provide their best possible work without having to worry about making ends meet.

The proposed bill is especially important in rural communities where the cost of living is typically lower. Many rural schools struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers and support staff, which can significantly impact the quality of education provided to students. This bill will help to ensure that rural schools can attract and retain the best teachers and support staff, which will ultimately benefit the students.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Legislative Committee to support this bill and pass it into law. By doing so, we will help to ensure that the dedicated and hardworking employees who serve our students receive the recognition and compensation they deserve. Our students' futures depend on it. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Devon Lawson-McCourt*

Sophomore Class President, McKenzie River Community School  
Vida, Oregon