

Dear Committee Chair, Vice Chairs, and members of the committee,

My name is Carina Quintanilla, and I am the Chicas Program Manager at Adelante Mujeres. Today, I am honored to testify in support of HB 4082, Invest in Summer Learning.

Our organization, Adelante Mujeres, is deeply committed to supporting diverse initiatives that foster equity in education. In this short legislative session, one of our key priorities is advocating for HB 4082, which focuses on providing crucial support for summer learning, particularly for students from historically underserved communities. I am here to emphasize the importance of this bill and its connection to programs like our invaluable Chicas program.

Most of the families that we work with face socioeconomic challenges, making it difficult for students to access educational resources during the summer. Summer learning initiatives, like those supported by HB 4082, ensure that all students, regardless of economic background, have equal opportunities to engage in educational activities. Summer learning is not only about academics but also about fostering social and emotional development. Especially for students of color, who may navigate multiple cultural identities, these programs provide a safe space for personal growth, self-expression, and building positive relationships with peers and mentors.

As the Chicas Program Manager, I've witnessed the transformative impact of our after-school program on the lives of the students we serve. The Chicas program goes beyond traditional classrooms, offering valuable academic support and mentorship. Students consistently express a heightened desire for higher education and report stronger connections with peers, teachers, and parents. The inclusive and culturally relevant approach fosters a sense of belonging, instilling confidence in their cultural identities. Additionally, participants highlight improved mental health support, emphasizing the holistic development fostered by educational programs outside of traditional classrooms.

As policymakers consider initiatives like HB 4082, it is imperative to recognize the multifaceted benefits that summer learning programs bring to our community. By investing in these programs, we not only invest in academic success but also contribute to the creation of empowered, resilient, and well-rounded individuals prepared for a brighter future.

In closing, I urge you to vote yes on HB 4082. By supporting this bill, you are not only investing in summer learning but also endorsing a broader initiative to promote equity in education, especially for students who need it the most. HB 4082 recognizes the unique needs of students in historically underserved communities and provides concrete measures to support them. By endorsing this bill, you are endorsing a pathway towards equity in education.

Sincerely,

Carina Quintanilla