

Addressed to: Chair Manning and members of the committee

For the record, my name is Brian King and during the summer of 2024, I was the volunteer Registered Nurse who ran the medical program for Oregon Summer Star Camp.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.

I grew up on the East Coast and spent most of my childhood summers attending summer camps. Because of those experiences, I then became a camp counselor and worked at camps from my hometown of Maryland, to camps in Colorado, and camps in California and Oregon and know firsthand the transformational power a camp can have on a child's life.

Once I became a Registered Nurse, I knew that part of my career would continue to evolve around youth, promoting community-oriented spaces, and fostering an environment of safe, supportive play. I discovered Oregon Summer Star the summer of 2024 and was truly inspired by the program they put together. I chose to volunteer my time with them offering my services as a nurse to run their medical program and I plan to return again for the summer of 2026 with your help.

If you have never been to a summer camp before it may be hard to fully translate the magic which can happen in those spaces. Words simply fall short trying to define the community which gets built, the deep bonds of friendship and sisterhood and brotherhood which get formed over the span of a short week, and the re-emergence of childhood and play away from screens, away from school, away from the typical pressures of life. This is especially true for our military connected community who often feel a disconnect with their peers and community. They face unique pressures in their life which I may not fully understand but I know I want to provide them with a space to be children again. I want to provide them the space to reconnect with the wish, wonder, and surprise of childhood. To provide them with a home away from home. That is something I will always advocate for and what Oregon Summer Star truly sets out to do.

Without funding allocated by SB466, we may not be able to accomplish this. Without this funding we may not be able to meet our mission and fail our military connected families and community. I hope this will not happen and we can continue running our program as we truly believe it is a necessary and important program to maintain. We urge the committee to schedule a work session, get the bill to the Senate floor for a vote, and help it pass to support Oregon's military and veteran families.

I imagine you are receiving a lot of testimony around this and other important issues so I truly do thank you for your time and attention. I know reading through documents can be taxing and monotonous, so truly, thank you Chair Manning and the committee for your time.

Regards,
Brian King, RN BSN