

Submitter: Gabrielle Pargett
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB717

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Webber, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gabrielle Pargett and I am an early career educator in my fourth year of my teaching vocation. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB717, which seeks to address financial barriers for aspiring educators and ensure mentor teachers receive fair compensation.

During my student teaching practicum in 2019 I was not able to work and make an income while being in my full time teacher preparation program, meaning I was teaching alongside my mentor teacher in a public elementary school 40+ hours a week. My teacher to student contact time was 8:00 am - 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday, with one day a week I had a required one hour staff meeting to attend after school. Outside of teacher/student contact time I spent an additional 2-3 hours a day preparing lesson plans, creating materials for students, and completing assignments per program requirements. I did not have time to work a part time job during this time, and even if I did have two or three hours here and there to work a part time job, I was exhausted both mentally and physically from teaching seven and eight year old children all day.

SB 717 will make a difference for aspiring educators because ensuring paid student teaching programs will allow for the student teachers to be fully immersed in their training rather than splitting their focus between working multiple jobs and their practicum.

Educator shortages, particularly in high-need areas and subjects, can be mitigated by making the teaching profession more attractive and accessible. Paid student teaching is an incentive that encourages more people to enter the field.

The financial strain of unpaid student teaching is a major factor in early-career educator attrition. Nationally, 44% of teachers leave within their first five years, often due to the financial stress of unpaid teaching.

Please support the SB 717 because student teachers should be paid for their work and not work unpaid for their time and service.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Gabrielle Pargett

Gelpargett@gmail.com
Astoria Education Association