

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

My name is Virginia Jones, and I am an aspiring educator at the University of Oregon. 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.

Having a job that can financially sustain a student while they are doing their student teaching is not practical. Student teachers are in the classroom all day and then have night classes and additional coursework to complete after. This has caused me major anxiety and stress as someone who aspires to be a teacher. It seems impossible to fully dedicate myself to learning to be the best teacher possible for my future students when I face the possibility of not being able to pay rent or pay for food. I know that the fact that student teaching is not paid is a major factor in leading aspiring educators away from the profession.

The fact that student teaching is not paid means that aspiring educators have to take out more loans. With the current teacher pay it is not feasible for these hardworking teachers to continue in this profession while also being financially stable. Unpaid student teaching is contributing to the teacher shortage and it is everyone's job to fix it.

In order to continue having excellent educators there needs to be a change in supporting those teachers. That starts with supporting SB717 and paying student teachers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Virginia Jones

virginiajones0919@gmail.com

University of Oregon