

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

My name is Jennifer Rincon Gonzalez, and I am an aspiring and future educator, with an education major at Oregon State University. 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.

I am to start student teaching in the fall of 2025 and understand that I need to start preparing my finances for the whole 2025-2026 academic year starting now. I have begun needing to budget for this future financial challenge and meeting with a professional every month from now on, along with tirelessly applying to scholarships in hopes that I can be set for at least part of my finances like rent or tuition. I definitely believe that the stress for finding funds for bills and tuition will impact how I practice teaching. I do plan on working a few hours in the fall term, but won't be by spring term since I will be full-time student teaching. I have seen 2 coworkers and friends be impacted by the fact that they need to work. One of them is an elementary major and the other in secondary. They do seem tired needing to come to work or class after being in the classroom with students. It makes me nervous because I know they are great and strong people, so I wonder how I will be able to go to class after being in the classroom for hours AND go to work to be able to pay for the roof over my head.

Paid student teaching makes it possible for future and aspiring teachers to be fully focused on their training, instead of needing to worry about working enough hours to still have a job and pay for their bills. That focus should only be on their practicum so that we can continue having confident and well-trained teachers in the workfield.

I plead and urge the committee to show the support for SB717 and think of future generations and their education. We need our educators and we need to show the support they need. We have all made it to where we are with the help from our teachers and professors, so please think of your favorite educator at this moment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rincon Gonzalez

Fourth Year, Secondary Education major at Oregon State University.