

Submitter: Susan Gardner
On Behalf Of: Oregon State University
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB717

Dear Senate Committee on Education:

On behalf of the College of Education at Oregon State University, I write to provide strong support of SB 717 to provide stipends for student teachers. Like other states that have provided such stipends, Oregon would show leadership in supporting what have always been unpaid student teaching internships through the creation of this pilot program. At Oregon State University, we find that our pre-service teachers, many who are low-income, first-generation students, struggle throughout their student teaching year to make ends meet. These full-time internships are vital to learn the science of teaching but preclude employment that can sustain them. Providing a stipend during the internship year would mean that students could continue in their learning and professional development while being able to pay for rent, food, and transportation to and from these internships. Moreover, such financial support would bring the teaching profession in line with other internships in many other fields including business and engineering, which have always provided paid opportunities. Unlike those other professions, however, public education does not have the resources to pay pre-service teachers. Through the creation of this pilot program, Oregon would be sending the strong message of support to the teaching profession and its future health through these stipends. Knowing the average starting pay for new teachers across Oregon is \$40,000, providing financial support for student teachers can assist in ameliorating some of the additional student loan debt many would otherwise have to take on to sustain themselves during this required internship.

Thank you for your ongoing support of public education, teachers, and our children.

Sincerely,

Susan K. Gardner, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Education
Oregon State University