

Submitter: Johnny Morales Duran  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB717

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

My name is Johnny Morales-Duran, and I am currently a student teacher at Oregon State University, I am writing in strong support of SB717, which would provide financial compensation for student teachers.

Right now, student teaching is unpaid full-time labor, yet we are still required to pay tuition and cover our own living expenses. Unlike internships in other fields, we do not have the option of paid placements or part-time hours. Instead, we work a full school day, lesson plan, grade assignments, attend meetings, and complete coursework—all while receiving no financial support.

Here's what that looks like in reality for me and countless other unpaid teachers:

- Many student teachers are forced to take out loans just to survive. We are paying to work, even as we dedicate ourselves to shaping the future of education.
- Others work part-time jobs late into the evening, sacrificing sleep, self-care, and mental well-being just to make ends meet.
- Some even consider leaving the program because they simply cannot afford to continue working for free.

I have personally felt the financial strain of this experience. There have been nights when I come home exhausted from a full day of teaching and still have hours of coursework to complete, only to wake up early and do it all over again. I've had to make tough choices—do I spend what little money I have on gas to get to my placement, or on groceries? No one preparing for a career in education should have to make those choices.

Meanwhile, Oregon is facing a teacher shortage. If we want to recruit and retain high-quality educators, we must make the student teaching experience financially sustainable. Right now, it's an economic barrier that pushes many potential teachers away—people who would otherwise bring passion, talent, and commitment to our classrooms.

Paying student teachers is not just about fairness—it's about making sure Oregon students have strong, well-prepared teachers leading their classrooms. Please support SB717 and help ensure the next generation of educators can afford to stay in the profession.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Johnny Morales-Duran  
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