

March 19, 2025

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chair McIntire, Vice-Chair Dobson, and members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Brianda Regalado. I am the Chicas Partnerships Coordinator at Adelante Mujeres. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2007, which threatens the funding and accessibility of vital after-school and summer learning programs for our most vulnerable youth. As the Partnerships Coordinator, I work closely with community partners to ensure young people have access to enriching, culturally relevant learning opportunities beyond the classroom. However, my dedication to this work is deeply personal as I previously served as a Chicas Youth Advocate, mentoring young girls in leadership and identity development. I have spent five years in the classroom working with marginalized communities.

During my years as an educator, I witnessed firsthand the deep educational disparities that persist for low-income and immigrant students. Many of these young people faced systemic barriers that made academic success feel out of reach. However, I also saw how transformative after-school and culturally responsive summer learning programs can be. These programs provide not only academic enrichment but also mentorship, social-emotional support, and a sense of belonging that traditional school settings often fail to offer.

For many students, after-school and summer programs are lifelines keeping them engaged, fostering their passions, and supporting working families who rely on these programs as safe spaces for their children. Defunding or restricting access to these opportunities would only widen the existing achievement gap and disproportionately impact the very students who need them the most.

I urge you to stand with the communities that will be most affected by this bill. Investing in expanded learning programs is an investment in our collective future ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to thrive. I hope you consider the sustainability of education programs to build on the work of HB 4082 and vote against HB 2007.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brianda Regalado