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April 4, 2019

Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee,

I am the Director of a program that teaches nutrition and other subjects using school gardens, at nine Title 1 schools in the Portland, Reynolds, David Douglas and Centennial School Districts. Our educators frequently meet students who come to school hungry and thus have a hard time learning.

On behalf of Growing Gardens, I'm writing today to urge you to pass the Hunger-Free Schools Bills:

- **HB 2760-1: Universal Access to School Meals.** Makes Oregon's schools hunger-free by filling federal funding gaps so 761 schools with the highest need can offer meals to all kids at no charge. For the remaining 484 schools, Oregon would provide targeted support to students so eligibility for school meals is consistent with children's health insurance.
- **HB 2765-1: Breakfast After the Bell.** Ensures students have access to breakfast at school by ensuring that breakfast is available after the bell at schools with the highest rates of poverty.

These bills also complement the Farm to School bill. As a state, we need to increase the *quality* of food we provide, while increasing the *access* to these meals.

A report by the Oregon Health Division cautions that this generation of children has a lower life expectancy than their parents, due to chronic illness linked to diet and exercise. This is shocking, unacceptable and preventable. Please help change this trajectory, by increasing the number of students who are well-nourished, healthy and ready to learn.

Sincerely,



Anna Garwood
Youth Grow Program Director
Growing Gardens

We help people grow their own food!

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