

As a Secondary Agricultural Educator, and FFA Advisor at Oakland High School for nineteen years, I submit this testimony to encourage you to vote in support of continuing these funds. During the last biennium, engagement in our agricultural programs across the state of Oregon has increased, due to the additional opportunities available to students. I can speak directly to the increase at Oakland High School. The number of historically underserved students that have opted to be involved in our summer programming has nearly doubled in the last two years; this would not have been possible without the summer extended grant money, especially during the tumultuous pandemic season. While it was easy for students to "opt out" of programming when they were disconnected from school, these additional funds allowed teachers such as myself to continue working with students, even from a distance. The number of students already planning to participate this summer is increased by at least 20% from last year.

Besides summer engagement, these funds have increased the resources provided by Oregon FFA and this has led to all students in my classes having the opportunity to participate in the student leadership organization. For example, instead of only having 10 students participate in the Floriculture career development event, because of the additional resources provided, we had 25 participate in the virtual CDE last year, and I am anticipating the same number participate in a live format this year. Furthermore, because of the resources being provided to teachers from the state association, we are able to increase the number of CDE's our students participate in. Thus offering a more diverse curriculum to our students. For example, rather than just focusing on Floriculture and Forestry as our school would historically participate in, this spring we have students preparing for Ag Mechanics, as well as Milk quality and Food Science. This increased number of participants is because of the additional resources provided to us as teachers.

One further example I can give, to speak to the increase involvement, we had 100% student engagement in our Virtual State Convention this year. Because these funds allow for affiliate membership, and open the doors for ALL students to be engaged in the FFA Organization, I in fact had 100% (110 students) participating in leadership workshops and general FFA Sessions, during the 2021 State Convention. While a virtual convention may not ultimately be ideal, in the current educational setting, it was an amazing opportunity, provided by our Oregon FFA Association, to benefit ALL Agricultural-Education students across the entire state. We know our purpose in CTE is to engage students in leadership and hands-on work-place opportunities. Sometimes it is difficult to provide these opportunities to all students. Because of these funds, more resources are available, which opens the doors for every student in an agriculture program. Please continue to support these opportunities as we grow our students.