

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

From: Jeff Papke

Instructor, Agriculture Science and Technology Department, Mt View HS

Advisor, Bend FFA

Past President, Oregon Agriculture Teachers Association

RE: SB 5513 Support

I offer my written testimony in support of HB 5513.

In 2019, you fully funded HB 2444. Little did we know then the impact that support would have on our high school students and FFA members. Specifically, I'd offer evidence from last Spring. As all school in Oregon shifted to virtual instruction, many if not most students disengaged from their classes and teachers. With one exception, our FFA members. Through the FFA virtual state convention, virtual Career Development Events (CDE), and virtual FFA meetings, FFA members stayed engaged in school and their education. The FFA "family" that our chapters create offered that connection and sense of belonging these high school students so desperately needed as their world was turned inside out by COVID and the quarantine.

March 14, our FFA staff began the monumental task to move an entire state convention and 20+ career development events "on-line". We organized a watch party for 20 chapter members to watch convention, together, and celebrate the successes of our members. We had over 40 different chapter members compete in one or more virtual CDE's last Spring. All 40 tried at least one new CDE they had never competing in before. Our Parliamentary Procedure Team started competing in January face-to-face. They had earned the opportunity to compete at the state contest to be held at state convention. Parli Pro is not a contest that lends itself to being held virtually. Our team continued to practice in to mid-June when we finally were able to organize and hold a virtual contest. I am proud to say they placed first in the state.

FFA provided them the opportunity motivation to stay engaged in school and learning while the majority of their classmates started their Summer Break March 14, 2020. Even through Summer and to date this school year. Our FFA members are complimented by our fellow teachers for attending class every day and completing their school work. These students would not be demonstrating the success and dedication to school if it were not for FFA.

This year, we have held all our monthly chapter meetings virtually. While not ideal, these meetings have drawn students to the FFA. Again, students crave a sense of belonging. FFA meet that need for our students, Our chapter membership has increased by 17%. We have over 10 middle school students who have been attending meetings and becoming involved in our chapter. We have never had more than 3 middle school members interested in any given year.

Oregon FFA could not have provided these opportunities without the support from HB 2444 passed in 2019. HB 2444 would not have passed without the support from you, our Oregon

Legislators. On behalf of our teachers and most importantly, our FFA members, THANK YOU!  
We deeply and sincerely appreciate the support and look forward to your support for HB 5513, HB  
5513 will provide continued funding for Oregon FFA and those opportunities FFA can offer.