

Dear Co-Chair Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Vice Chair Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod, Co-Vice Chair Representative David Gomberg, Co-Vice Chair Greg Smith, and Ways and Means Committee Members:

My name is Annabelle Morgan and I live in Washington County. I am writing to support continued funding for OSU Extension Service programs. As a youth, I became a second generation

4-H member, and as soon as my children were old enough, I became a club leader and am presently a resource leader, a member of Washington County 4-H Association Board, HEARTH Advisory Chair, and Metro 4-H Awards & Recognition member and have been a Superintendent at County Fairs and a Chair at State Fair. This is my 32nd year volunteering. There is a reason 4-H is called a 4-H Youth Development Program; it affords all youth K-12 an opportunity to explore any interest they have through both club and school-based programs supported with curriculum and with agents and volunteers whose focus is on creating a sense of belonging, inclusion, meeting individual needs, affording opportunities for community service, leadership, and communication skills, through members' given opportunities to teach younger members, to do presentations and public speaking. Through club activities, children learn life skills which are not taught in schools. Camp experiences teach them to work together and explore the outdoors. Animal projects and the new Pet Partners Program build a greater understanding of the bond between animals and people and the need to give animals the best care possible. Through friendly competition at pre-fairs and fairs and judges' constructive positive comments, they learn how hard work and "Making Your Best Better" not only leads to immediate rewards, but enables them to gain confidence and become mentors to younger members in their clubs. In the words of one 4-H member, "4-H taught me I could do anything." Both of my children gained life skills, confidence they needed, and a willingness to accept challenges through 4-H. They have implemented leadership and communication skills, group cooperation skills, and dedication to community service in their lives and jobs (one is presently Vice principal in a school of almost 100% poverty students and will be Principal there next fall). In a world where big schools can swallow up individuals and few have opportunities to be a part of a group which affords positive experiences, 4-H not only creates a safe educational environment for youth, but they are mentored by compassionate adults, both 4-H agents and volunteers who are vested in creating a sense of belonging to a group which builds a better community rather than to some gang which tears it down. This is essential as it assists them to meet their potential and to become responsible, productive citizens. In addition to 4-H, OSU Extension Service programs, like EFNEP reach out to many underprivileged families teaching healthy nutrition and meal preparation skills needed for healthy living. Extension Forestry Programs do research and teach classes to assist Christmas Tree and Small Woodland Owners create healthy habitats and tree farms and the Firewise Program. Master Gardeners programs, Food Preservation classes and helplines assist the public by answering questions about all aspects of gardening, garden pests, and safe food preservation practices. Extension fills an educational void not filled by any other program and is accessible and beneficial to all Oregonians. I thank you for considering the benefits of continuing to fund the OSU Extension Service Programs.

Sincerely,

Annabelle Morgan