



Date: March 2, 2021
To: House Revenue Committee, Chair Nathanson and Members
From: Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations
RE: *HB 2819 [ITINS expansion of EITC]*

On behalf of the 41,000 members of the Oregon Education Association, I'm honored to testify today in support of HB 2819, which will improve the lives – and therefore, the learning -- of our students.

We support adding households with tax ID numbers to the Earned Income Tax Credit because of what we know about our students and how they learn. More than 50% of our K-12 students are from low-income households, with more than 20% meeting the federal definition of poverty. We also know that our students' out-of-school lives account for 90% of their time, and so those intersectional, external factors of racism, poverty, violence, lack of medical/dental access, housing and food insecurity, and family trauma have an outsized impact on student success. According to research by educational psychologist David Berliner, out-of-school variables such as those I've described account for about 60% of the variance in student achievement. [See endnotes]

Here in the U.S., we have the biggest income inequality gap of all wealthy nations. Education researchers tell us that better design of economic and social policies can do more to improve education than can in-school interventions. By reducing the income and wealth inequality gaps, families have a shot at thriving.

As my friends have heard me say for decades, "it's hard to educate a student who is hungry, hurting, or homeless."

The Oregon Legislature and the voting public have done much to bridge this most urgent of opportunity gaps. Knowing that we must ensure that there exist enough jobs that provide families a living wage to improve educational outcomes, you have focused on economic development. You have raised the state minimum wage. Preschool and other early education programs have come onboard, and recent efforts to expand access to them have been successful. We have begun to fund some of the great need for summer learning programs. Nutrition programs have been expanded. Health care access covers many more Oregon children. And a laser focus on housing and homelessness is robust in this body.

One more significant way to make meaningful change in the lives of our students is to expand the ability of our working poor to use the EITC. HB 2819 should be seen as part of an integrated strategy to improve the conditions of our students' lives as a meaningful way to ensure their academic success. As Dr. Berliner has said, "Powerful social forces exist to constrain the lives led by the poor, and our nation pays an enormous price for not trying harder to ameliorate these conditions."

The members of the OEA ask this body to try harder. Thank you.

Research sources for this testimony

Out of school factors:

- Berliner, David C. (2009). Poverty and Potential: Out-of-School Factors and School Success. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved [date] from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/poverty-and-potential>
- https://naleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NALEO_PI_AZ_Governance_SessionII_RES_Dr.Berliner_12719.pdf
- <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=16889>

Segregation by poverty:

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/01/20/the-achievement-gap-in-education-racial-segregation-versus-segregation-by-poverty/>

Racism and stress:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/10/how-the-stress-of-racism-affects-learning/503567/>

<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3648&context=jssw>