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On Behalf Of: The CREST at Willow Witt Ranch  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB531

The 2021 and 2022 grants for summer enrichment programs administered by the Oregon Department of Education were game changers for students attending Nature Summer Day Camp at The Crest near Ashland.

In a community still reeling from the 2020 Labor Day fires, the grants enabled free bus transportation from Central Point, Talent, and Ashland to the Crest in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, making summer enrichment possible for more than 200 children of working parents. In addition to the buses, used by nearly all attendees, The Crest was able to provide scholarship funds to 54% of campers and 2 bags of fresh organic vegetables for campers to take home weekly.

We support Senate Bill 531 to fund on-going grants for this important educational resource for Oregon students, especially economically challenged youth. These campers would not be able to attend without these funds and they are the future environmental activists and protectors, not to mention the physical and health benefits from being outdoors in this constructive environment.