

Submitter: Pat Mallon

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5014

Good Morning,

I come to you as a Stanfield Oregon Farm Direct Rancher that's participated in the Farm to School Program for close to a Decade. I come as one who supports the program more out of experiencing and knowing the program than one who may participate as a seller in the future.

If you ever get a chance, I encourage you to spend some time with the various school kitchen staff that go to the School Nutritional program every March. You will find some well-funded schools doing amazing things. You will also find a good number of our schools with dedicated staff that are struggling to provide any sort of good meal to our kids in those districts. Listen to the stories and you will find your heart both warmed and broken in so many ways.

Farm to School gives those Schools a chance to serve much better Oregon grown crafted foods; full of the nutrients that will help our kids have a better chance of focusing and thriving. Full of the Flavor that will encourage them to eat better. Our States Farms are so capable of providing better.

The James Beard award is given to chefs in honor of the Late James Beard. James Beard was a noted Chef from the Northwest that traveled and worked worldwide. He said, "The best Food Ingredients come from the Northwest." Farm to School is our chance to provide these programs with the best sustenance for our kids.

I grew up in Joseph Oregon. Margaret Botts and her crew provided some of the best scratch cooking meals a school program could. As I have come back to realizing what School Cafeterias put out given their resources, I can't say the same is happening in most of our state's cafeterias given the resources they have to work with. Listen to the stories of the Kitchen staff's and you will find that when Farm to School funds and resources are available, The Kitchens and the kids know there is an impactful difference.

Look closely at the Program and you will see the resources include provisions to make the infrastructure to the schools stronger by investing in the supply side of the program. It is a well thought out and structured program. These investments will continue to give back to Oregon.

As a 58-year-old lifelong resident of Oregon, I can tell you this is one of the most

incredible tax dollar supported programs I have ever seen. The original program I believe was running at around 2 Million Dollars when a Representative out of Hood River asked for close to 15 Million? It was substantial. What was amazing was that there was One Hundred Percent Support in the House and Senate. Let that sink in. In today's contentious political arena? We had a Bill pass with full support of all of our elected officials. They all saw the value.

Covid hit. All funds had to be cut and that is something I understand fully. As I write in support of this Bill I am a bit disappointed. Given all the good it has done, Given all the support that comes to it, why are we settling for 10 Million? Why aren't we asking for more? Why aren't we giving our children and our Oregon Businesses and Schools a better opportunity to excel? In today's Political Climate of passing executive orders to fund a Governor's personal agenda when it goes against what our citizens or legislature have voted on, when so much is found to support those things, why aren't we stepping up to the plate on something that had so much agreement? Why are we shorting our kids, our school staffs, our Oregon Businesses? This is but a small starting step to dress nutritional inequity in many of our schools.

The dollar amount former personal business is not really that much. Part of this is because other Oregon Ranchers have found ways to donate Beef to Schools. I am very happy for that. Please don't take the statement that in the future, we may sell very little to nothing to schools as me not appreciating what we have sold. I just want you to understand that I come to support this program as an Oregonian that has looked at it very closely.

Thank You