



May 3, 2023

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. For the record, my name is Briana Babbitt. I work at Foundations for a Better Oregon, and we are a member of Oregon Partners for Education Justice. I'm testifying to ask you to invest in the education funding priorities supported by the Oregon Partners for Education Justice, notably to provide sustainable support for community-based summer learning and after-school programs for youth and families in Oregon.

When he was growing up, my husband's mom was a teacher in the Reynolds School District, in East Multnomah County. She had off every summer, and could care for my husband and his sister. He thought that going to camp, or other organized summer activities, was a privilege for wealthy people, and looked forward to his allowed week or two each summer. I, on the other hand, had two parents that worked full time throughout the summer, and as a result, my brother and I needed someone to care for us when school was out. Despite it being something that we "had to" do, we also looked forward to our organized summer activities each summer. Now, my husband and I are parents of two-year-old. By investing sustainable funding in these programs now, we are ensuring that she, her peers, and future Oregon children will also be able to look forward to weeks of summer enrichment.

Kids spend a huge amount of their time in school. But learning doesn't stop when the school day, and year, are over - it continues outside of the classroom. So summer programming - educational experiences and camps - provide opportunities for children to spend time with their peers, in programs in their communities, and to not only learn, but to grow and thrive. And this programming is especially needed for our students who are already historically underserved: students of color, students with disabilities, students who live in rural communities, among many others.

Investing in community-based summer learning programs sends a message to Oregon students: we care about you. We care about you being in a safe space, with the opportunity to have joyful, exciting, stimulating, eye-opening experiences, surrounded by your community, not just during the school year, but all year long. Please support this sustainable funding for summer learning, as an opportunity to tell our students that we care about them - not only our students who need this programming in just a month from now, but also in the summers to come. Thank you for your time.

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