

Devon Garcia
Regarding SB 466
1/27/2025

My name is Devon Garcia. I was a camp counselor at Oregon Summer Star this recent 2024 season for the first time. I am writing to express support of Senate Bill 466.

As a newcomer to the community with very little distant military connection, I knew that I was coming from a different background and level of knowledge than most in the program, and still I was met with a warm, welcoming community that I was able to learn so much from. I've heard from those who have been returners to the program for many years how much they look forward to this one week of camp and how much it means to them. For these young campers, it isn't the location but the community they consider a home. I found that factor of the program very heartwarming, seeing that it's something so many have grown up with and that it doesn't matter how far away everyone is from each other after they go home from camp; they will find each other here every year, given they have the opportunity to return.

Making camp free for families would help make the program more accessible for all and increase the outreach to provide support for these families and military-affected youth, whether they're new or returning to the program. Children of veterans are an underserved population with unique experiences and struggles that could greatly benefit from the resources and connection to an understanding community this program provides and the lessons learned on how to be resilient and navigate these struggles, as well as giving them a fun, memorable summer. For these reasons, I advocate that you vote in support of SB 466.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Devon Garcia