

Submitter: Alea Kolander
On Behalf Of: Elementary Students in Douglas County
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3435

My name is Alea Kolander and I am third grade teacher in Douglas County, specifically Roseburg Public Schools. I am writing my testimony in SUPPORT of School Meals for All as this should be an issue NO child has to worry about. In my six years as an elementary, public schools teacher, I have interacted with and gotten to know families who come from many different circumstances; middle class, experiencing poverty, etc., and ALL families have been thankful for free meals at our schools. Unfortunately, the financial well-being of their families has become an item of worry for many students and it is the LEAST we can do to ease the thought of a literal child wondering, "Will I have enough to eat today?". In fact, I myself, although I did not grow up experiencing poverty but in what would be considered the "middle class", remember the stress I felt being told that my lunch account balance was empty, and that they would not be giving me a meal the next day if it was not paid. I had a two, working parent household. Imagine the stress of a single parent household, or multi-child household with parents whose jobs do not pay a sustainable, living wage, as is shockingly common amidst today's workforce. Access to food is a basic human right and we as a state, as a NATION, should be willing and able to provide that right for children within our schools, whom we REQUIRE to be there. If we say that we are striving for a bright future, that we yearn for generations to learn from us and grow in a way that creates a society in which issues like starvation and homelessness no longer exist, it starts here in our schools, by providing a basic, human right. I urge you to also support this proposal, to promote an environment that is caring and supportive, for current and future children within our public schools. I urge you to share and empathize within our humanity. Thank you for taking time to read my testimony.