

Submitter: Margaret Lombard
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB717

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Webber. and Members of the Committee,
My name is Maggie Lombard, and I am a middle school teacher and reading interventionist for Portland Public Schools. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB717, which seeks to address financial barriers for aspiring educators and ensure mentor teachers receive fair compensation.

Student teaching asks aspiring teachers to not only work an unpaid internship, but pay for the privilege to do so. Student teaching is typically coordinated by universities, which meant that I was paying for college credits in order to do free labor for North Clackamas School District. I had to quit my paying restaurant job in order to dedicate time to finishing grad school and student teaching, meaning that for approximately five months, I had zero income. As you can imagine, this was a major financial strain.

Paid student teaching ensures aspiring teachers are fully immersed in their training rather than splitting their focus between working multiple jobs and their practicum. If my student teaching was paid, I would have been able to fully immerse myself in the practicum. My mental and physical health would have been much stronger- being uninsured and under major financial stress was extremely detrimental, as you can imagine. No student teacher should have to choose between their health and their career, and yet, many are forced to make this choice. I tore my meniscus during spring term of student teaching and was unable to pursue care beyond initial emergency triage due to my financial situation. Years later, my knee is still injured due to the lack of care after the injury.

I urge the committee to listen to the educators who offer testimony and support SB717. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Maggie Lombard
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Portland Association of Teachers