

Submitter: Sada Adams
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 Sada Adams, and I am a third-year teacher and a first-year special education teacher. I am currently back in school, student teaching to earn my special education endorsement. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB717, which seeks to remove financial barriers for aspiring educators and ensure mentor teachers receive fair compensation.

I completed my first round of student teaching in 2023. Teaching high school has always been important to me—particularly because representation of queer adults in schools matters. However, during that first round, I was unable to work and went six months without pay. To get by, I had to take out student loans, increase my credit card limit, and live in a crowded house with roommates. Student teaching was one of the most stressful experiences of my life. Every day, I was observed by multiple people while doing my job, crafting lesson plans that were far more elaborate than what is realistic in daily teaching. Then I would come home to a crowded house, struggling to budget for groceries—only to spend hours doing unpaid work late into the night.

Teaching is a profession that cannot be done well without self-care. Without the ability to decompress, teachers burn out. And if we are burning out before we are even certified, we will never have the quality educators our students deserve.

As I mentioned, I am now in my second round of student teaching. This time, I am working full-time because I cannot afford to take on more debt. Lately, I've compared my life to that of a Hallmark movie villain—all I do is work and study, just to hold onto a job that, even in the long run, does not offer high pay. If I had the ability to work part-time, I could spend time with loved ones, recharge, and truly dedicate myself to my learning. When you are juggling too many responsibilities, you cannot do any of them well.

Paid student teaching would ensure that aspiring educators are fully immersed in their training, rather than being forced to split their focus between multiple jobs and their practicum. If I could devote my full attention to my learning, I would be a better teacher.

I strongly support SB717 and urge the committee to do the same. This bill will result in stronger, better-prepared, and less burned-out teachers—something that benefits

students, schools, and communities alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sada Adams

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