

Submitter: Katie Kohler
On Behalf Of: Oregon education association
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB717

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Webber. and Members of the Committee,
My name is Katie Kohler, and I am a teacher in Klamath Falls City 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.

When I was a student teacher in 2017-2018 my boyfriend at the time who was supporting us while I was doing unpaid teaching lost his job. I had to take out an extra loan which wasn't much because the government says how much you can have. Bills went unpaid. We had to move in with our family because we couldn't afford rent. It was so stressful that it was hard to keep up with my studies and my student teaching. If my student teaching had been paid so much of this stress would have been nonexistent.

The financial strain of unpaid student teaching is a major factor in early-career educator attrition. Nationally, 44% of teachers leave within their first five years, often due to the financial stress of unpaid teaching. So many amazing teachers do not finish their degree because they simply cannot afford to.

Something must be done in order to bring in new teachers. Do what is right and pay the students teachers so that they may finish their degrees and join the profession.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Kohler

Teacher

Klamath City School District