

Submitter: Forrest Pratt
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 Forrest Pratt, and I am an aspiring educator. 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.

I am currently going through my year of unpaid student teaching. I love working with students and other educators, and imparting my knowledge and passion for science is my calling. However, the stress and financial challenge of this year has made me hesitant to begin working in Oregon's public schools. I am not planning on working in a classroom during the upcoming school year, in large part due to the stress of this year. I have to balance my own needs in school, work, and life with the needs of my students, and it feels like no one is getting the best version of myself. I also know other aspiring educators who have been discouraged from teaching entirely because of the financial burden of the student teaching commitment.

Paying student teachers would allow us to put more into our practicum experiences. This would benefit us by relieving the stress of splitting our attention between so many different commitments. It would also benefit our students, mentor teachers, and other colleagues within our schools by allowing us to be more fully involved in our teaching placements, increasing continuity and minimizing stress-induced missteps. A more supportive student teaching experience would increase aspiring educators' confidence and satisfaction as we enter our teaching careers.

I urge you to support SB717 to support Oregon's aspiring educators, mentor teachers, students, and the future of Oregon's education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Forrest Pratt