

Submitter: Stephanie Mattingly
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB717

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Webber, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stephanie Mattingly, and I am a first-grade teacher in my third-year teaching under a restricted license while still going to school to finalize my Master's in education in order to be an educator in the state of Oregon. I had to register to be a teacher while finishing my program in university, under the emergency restricted license; in order to pay the mortgage my spouse and I took over after his parents died in the last 2 years within a year of each other. I had no other recourse except to work while finishing my degree requirements. I am a mom and a wife who has bills every single month. I am not independently wealthy and did not decide to go into education willy nilly. I decided after years of working in many other jobs that where I wanted to be was education, helping children, building their social emotional skills so that they can then go on to do the academic learning we all need. I worked in education support personnel positions for 7 years before Covid hit and during the pandemic I chose to go back to school. This looked like borrowing more money in the form of student loans which puts our family even deeper in debt.

I had to fight with my university mentor and my school district to get the option to teach while learning how to teach. With the current economic situations, the bulk of America is currently facing, we cannot afford to be free labor. Teaching is hard, it is the hardest job I have ever done in my long work life, and I have done sweaty hard labor jobs. I still came home and had time and emotional availability for my family. When I come home from my days teaching I have almost zero time and emotional availability for my spouse and son. I often must force myself to eat dinner, take care of proper hygiene needs (showering, brushing teeth), taking care of my pets, doing regular daily chores, doing my homework for my classes, or even doing leisurely activities. I am exhausted. I am doing the work of two people in my daily life by going to school and working at a school and I am not two people. Student teachers deserve better, we deserve to be paid and paid fairly with a livable wage.

In no other profession do we require an employee to work for free. So why then do we consistently ask teachers to do this? Right now, I need you to vote for this bill and reimburse student teachers, because we are teachers, we are staff members, we deserve equitable and fair pay for the work we do.