

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

My name is Ella Johansen, and I am a student teacher at Oregon State University studying English and Education. 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 one of the lucky ones. My family is in the position to help support me financially through this year. It is because of their sacrifice that I can keep going. Many of my classmates, peers and colleagues do not share this experience. They are working multiple jobs to stay afloat, attending every single one of our classes (we're considered full time students at OSU by the way) and they show up at their teaching placements day in and day out. I work one campus job and I'm exhausted. My classmates and I are at the point in the year where we are taking over full classes at various k-12 schools in the Corvallis area. We are known by our students as the primary, the sole, the only teacher in charge. Our free time is spent pouring over lesson plans, making seating charts, completing homework for our college classes, showing up for a quick shift at work, and then maybe getting a 5 hours of sleep if we are lucky. The missing assignments are piling up, the grading stack for my high school class is overflowing, and I barely make it to my campus job awake, let alone on time.

I am stretched thin, my colleagues are stretched thin, and I wish I could be full there for my students. My students, whom I think about constantly, are not getting the best education that I know they could. My focus is shot and I'm overwhelmed with my busy schedule. If there were avenues to financially support those like me and my classmates during our student teaching year, we could really dig into our identities as educators instead of scrambling to make ends meet.

I urge you to invest in pre-service teachers like me, like my classmates. Education is liberation, don't you want to invest in that? In our future, in the future of the next generation? If the answer is yes, I urge you to vote in support of SB 717.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ella Johansen

Student Teacher-Oregon State University