

Submitter: Ellie VanDevelder  
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 Ellie VanDevelder, and I am an aspiring educator enrolled at Oregon State University. 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 so grateful that I have had the opportunity to learn and grow through my student teaching this year. I am in a cohort of about 25 aspiring educators, and I am the only person on the math track. There are a variety of reasons for this, but one of the most significant is the financial barrier. There are people who want to teach math, but it simply is not possible for them because they effectively have to pay to work for a year. I, for one, am going to graduate with about \$20,000 worth of debt. That would be more workable if I knew I was going to get a job right away that would help me to pay it off, but there's a good chance I'll be making less than double that in my first few years of teaching. I try to think about the future, and how I'm investing in it now, but sometimes the financial hurdles feel hopeless. I'm struggling now financially, and working hard to be able to continue my education, and I know that struggle will likely continue through the first bit of my career at least. While I won't be teaching for the money, I still need to be able to survive.

Many aspiring educators (myself included) struggle to work even a part time job because of the demands of our schooling. By April, I will be student teaching full time (40 hours per week), in addition to having class every two weeks, and working 3 different jobs to pay rent. It is impossibly difficult, and I'm one of the lucky ones. Without my parents' support, I'd probably be homeless; or I'd have to withdraw from school. This story is all too common – I am one of many passionate, excited, and caring people who can't wait to be a teacher, and yet the financial barriers could easily become insurmountable.

I urge this committee to support SB717 to support aspiring educators, students, and the education system as a whole. This would be a bold step in the fight for equity in education and it would empower more young, energized, and engaged people to become the next generation of educators. I know it won't directly impact my financial situation, but I know it will improve the system as a whole down the line, and I really couldn't ask for anything more.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Gabrielle VanDevelder  
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Oregon State University, Aspiring Educator of Foundational Mathematics