

March 24, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Education

RE: Strong Support for SB 749

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Jorge Negrete, and I live in Forest Grove, Oregon. I am writing to testify in strong support of the School Participatory Budgeting Act, SB 749, which will create a pilot program for Participatory budgeting in schools.

As someone who has worked in group homes and supported individuals with disabilities, I have seen firsthand the importance of empowering people to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. This bill aligns with that principle by giving students the opportunity to actively participate in shaping their educational spaces. Here are a few reasons why I strongly support this legislation:

- **Civic Engagement:** Allowing students to decide how funds are spent in their schools fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership. It teaches them the value of civic participation, which is crucial for building a more engaged and informed community.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** As a second-generation immigrant from Mexico, I understand the challenges faced by marginalized communities in accessing resources and opportunities. This program ensures that students from all backgrounds have a say in how their schools are improved, promoting equity and inclusion.
- **Real-World Skills:** Participatory budgeting prepares students for the future by teaching them critical skills like collaboration, budgeting, and problem-solving. These are essential tools for success in both their personal and professional lives.
- **Community Impact:** By investing in student led initiatives, we are not only improving schools but also strengthening our communities. When students feel heard and valued, they are more likely to contribute positively to society.

I urge you to pass the School Participatory Budgeting Act out of committee. This bill has the potential to transform our schools into spaces where students feel empowered and invested in their own success.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jorge Negrete