

Submitter: Lisbeth Marquez-Delgado
To: Senate Committee On Education
RE: Support SB 749

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

My name is Lisbeth Marquez-Delgado. I am writing to testify in strong support of the School Participatory Budgeting Act, SB 749, which will create a Participatory Budgeting (PB) pilot program that would allow students to decide on investments in their schools, thereby enhancing their educational environment and preparing students to be lifelong civic participants.

Growing up in outer East Portland and seeing participatory budgeting in action was only the beginning for Oregon to become a leader in democratizing education. I was involved in Youth Voice Youth Vote (YV²), Oregon's first participatory budgeting process, where I gained a deeper understanding of how to engage civically in my community and put it to practice with advocacy, as I am today. As participants in PB, youth leaders have opportunities to boost their professional development skills through public speaking and collaboration with other youth leaders. In my experience with YV², everyone, no matter how young or how they identify, was treated as an equal, which helps youth to feel respected and empowered to share their thoughts and ideas in an impactful setting.

Investing in youth today will encourage them to become innovative leaders who participate civically in the future. What better place to learn civic engagement than in schools among peers? Our youth and students are essential by bringing their experiences, ideas, and solutions. Through participating in PB, students strengthen their leadership skills and take on active roles to engage with community members, which creates a lasting impact in their local communities. When we allow our youth to envision and take a direct part in creating a positive future for their school environment, they feel more connected with and included in Oregon communities as a whole. PB has a role for everyone, and it is just a matter of opening up opportunities to our schools.

I appreciate the consideration of the committee and I am asking you to support SB 749.

Thank you,
Lisbeth Marquez-Delgado