

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 Xochitl Carrasco, and I am writing to testify in strong support of the School Participatory Budgeting Act, SB 749, which will create a pilot program that would allow students to decide investments in their schools, thereby enhancing their educational environment and preparing students to be lifelong civic participants.

In my experience working with local youth and community, I've seen firsthand how powerful it is when young people are given a voice in shaping their own environments. Too often, decisions that directly affect students are made without their input. Participatory budgeting would not only give students real agency over their schools, but it would also give them the hands-on opportunity to teach them invaluable skills, like collaboration, critical thinking, and budget management, that are not always part of the standard curriculum.

As someone with a degree in Political Science, I find it especially meaningful to see an opportunity where students are given real authority to have a seat at the table and to voice what they believe will improve their education and school experience. This isn't just theoretical engagement; it's hands-on democracy in action. Participation in a program like this would prepare students to take on more responsibility after high school, whether in college, the workforce, or their local communities.

I've also had the opportunity to see the amazing impact participatory budgeting has had in my local community of Gresham. Students were able to gain real-world experience by coming together to discuss ideas, negotiate priorities, and agree on how to allocate funding. These programs didn't just improve schools they did much more. The Youth Voice Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting program provided opportunities for job shadowing, mentorships, and hands-on work experience that many students wouldn't have access to otherwise. It's a transformative approach that empowers young people and builds stronger communities.

By equipping students with tools to understand and influence budgeting decisions, we are fostering a generation of informed, empowered civic leaders. Participatory budgeting is not just an investment in school improvement, but an overall investment in the future of local communities and democracy.

I urge you to support the School Participatory Budgeting Act and pass it out of committee.

Thank you,  
Xochitl Carrasco