

Dear Ways and Means Joint Sub Committee on Education,

As an agriculture instructor, FFA advisor, past FFA member, and parent of a future FFA member I write to ask you to fully fund FFA and career and technical education (CTE) programs at their current level and not accept the 11% cut in the proposed budget.

I can not begin to express how life changing CTE programs and FFA are in shaping the success of our youth. As an agriculture instructor of 11 years I have watched these programs shape the success of youth, save lives, and provide life skills students are still applying to this day. You can never truly understand the impact a program has on an individual until a student, years after graduating, walks up to you and says "FFA and my agriculture classes saved my life. I was headed down a bad path in life until I found my way in FFA."

These budget cuts would build barriers that would make it more challenging for students to get the full experience in their CTE classes and participate in FFA. I am a student who went through CTE courses and FFA during a time when these programs were going through budget cuts. I watched my family struggle to find the funds to pay for shop fees, my FFA membership, and other expenses that were encountered due to my participation in these programs. We made it work, but it was hard at times. When I reflect on my time in high school and what made the largest impact on my life and shaping my success it was my time in CTE and FFA.

We are always looking for the next innovation in education, however when you look at programs that work and keep youth in school it's proven that CTE is the solution. Don't make budget cuts to the programs that have proven their worth; this only hurts the success of our youth. Stand with our youth and fully fund Oregon FFA Support, Summer Ag Ed Days Grant Support, Secondary CTE Career Pathways Grants, CTE Revitalization Grants, and CTSO Student Leadership Center Grants.

Sincerely,



Nicole Merchant
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Agriculture Instructor
FFA Advisor