

## **WSPTA Testimony on E2SHB 1139 Friday April 4, 9 AM, Senate Ways & Means Committee**

Good morning Chair Rolfes and members of the committee.

Thank you for hearing this bill today.

I am Lizzy Sebring, representing the 130,000 members of Washington State PTA, in support of engrossed second substitute House Bill 1139. I am also a parent and a paraeducator and a constituent in the 21<sup>st</sup> legislative district.

Washington State PTA adopted a position last fall to support legislation and policies that recruit and retain effective educators, develop a diverse workforce, and ensure equity and access to educator programs through:

- Funding of recruitment and conditional scholarship programs;
- Expansion of PESB-approved conditional certificates and alternative routes to certification; and
- Phased in expansion of Beginning Educator Support Team grants to all schools.

Engrossed second substitute House Bill 1139 is a comprehensive approach to increasing the teacher pipeline and improving the diversity of our work force. Districts need tools like Grow Your Own, loan forgiveness, getting high school students excited about teaching, and much more to help us build a professional corps of educators who are also as diverse as the students they teach.

As a paraeducator for, I can tell you that supporting alternative route programs and scholarships like the Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship, which helps fund the costs associated with attaining a degree and a teaching certificate.

And yes, to implement these approaches will cost money. But if we don't invest now, the gap will only widen.

It is critical to support ways that make it possible for first generation graduates, students of color, and students from diverse experiences to become teachers without being deterred by the cost.

This bill will help. It passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support, and we urge you to pass it out of your committee. Thank you.