

Tia Stuart
The Narrow Way Farm
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Bill 111–Proponent Testimony
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Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Tia Stuart, owner/operator of The Narrow Way Farm. Thank you for the opportunity to present this written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 111.

As a farmer, Ag educator and mother, I believe that all people, especially children, should have the ability to connect with the land where they are living. Learning about and contributing to their food system is part of making that connection. Traditionally, Ag education, specifically farming, has been largely reserved for those residing in rural areas. Senate Bill 111 seeks to change this inequality by providing much needed funding for young people residing in urban areas.

Some important reasons why children should have an opportunity to contribute to their food system by learning urban agriculture techniques are:

Farming teaches children where their food comes from and how it is grown. Many children living in urban settings do not know where most of their food comes from. While they may know that food is grown “on a farm”, grocery stores or restaurants are typically the only place where they come in contact with food. Food from a farm is a generic idea for them that is disconnected from the reality of where and how their food is grown. This needs to change.

Farming helps teach children to have a greater appreciation for food. Children who participate in gardening or farming activities often have a change of perspective when it comes to food. Being rewarded with the fruits of their labor is exciting and they are more likely not to waste it. They are also more likely to taste fruits and vegetables that they are unfamiliar with if they are involved with the care of the plants. Increasing a greater variety of healthy fresh fruits and vegetable in their diet may lead to better health outcomes.

Farming helps teaches children responsibility: Caring for plants properly and consistently is essential for raising quality produce. Starting seeds, watering, fertilizing, weed and pest control, harvesting- these are just a few basic responsibilities that are part of farming. My children share these responsibilities with my husband and have grown up knowing how important their role is in the production of the food that feeds us, our extended family, and our neighbors. Every child should have this pleasure, not just children living in rural areas.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony on Senate Bill 111. I urge the Committee’s favorable consideration of the bill.