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Thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly about the innovative arts-integrated work our student volunteers are doing to enthuse, inform and educate themselves, K-12 students, and the general public about federal investment in exciting neuroscience research...

We want everyone to have time to examine brains, and speak directly with the extraordinary graduates and undergraduates we've brought to Washington DC, to learn about their research on opiate addiction, memory, cannabinoids, hearing loss, teenage brain development - and about their extensive, art-driven efforts to inform students and the public about research discovery in the Pacific Northwest...

We want to thank Glynda Becker of Washington State University for organizing this briefing. We'd like to thank Katie Sale from the American Brain Coalition, and Paul Aravich from Eastern Virginia Medical School, for providing the extra brains...

And we'd like to thank the co-chairs of the HELP committee for welcoming us to the US Senate. Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander, upon passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act last December, noted that this new law, which makes STEM education a priority, will "unleash a new era of innovation and excellence in student achievement." Just last month, Washington Senator Patty Murray introduced the Women and Minorities in STEM Booster Act, legislation that aims to increase the number of women and minorities entering STEM fields. The students we've brought here engage in extensive outreach in Title 1 schools, homeless youth centers, and through programs like MESA to offer academic enrichment for those without access to resources and opportunity. We've also found that collaboration amongst our graduates and undergraduates in science and the arts creates innovative, compelling, project based educational experiences that draw in many traditionally

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underrepresented students. We'd like to thank both Senators, and the entire HELP committee, for this chance to speak about how to engage more in K-12, and the general public, in the excitement and potential of research discovery...

We are NW Noggin - a diverse mix of cooperating regional partners who connect, and reach out like neurons to form strong links, and share resources and expertise. We bring graduates, undergraduates, K-12 students, and working scientists together to collaborate. We prepare students to confidently explain topics in neuroscience using art projects and activities in formal, informal, urban, and rural settings. The students you see here, from WSU, PSU, and OHSU, have presented in public schools, theaters, art museums, teacher trainings, scientific conferences, the symphony, homeless youth centers, breweries, and even bike shop/pubs!

In fact, since 2012, our volunteers have developed and delivered their own short- and long-term courses to more than 9,000 academic priority students throughout the Pacific Northwest! We also work with that bike pub (Velo Cult) and offer collaborative public presentations from students studying neuroscience and art. In the last year, these efforts informed more than 750 people about brain research, and gave graduate students experience communicating their work to a lay audience.

Neurons connect to form viable, productive networks, and people do too. Students struggling with school sometimes lack connections, they lack access, and awareness about available options. Many kids don't have a doctor or scientist or artist in their family, and bringing our students in - their "near peers" - suddenly makes these possibilities quite real. Our participants introduce research, and art, to make educational and career opportunities visible, and tangible to others.

And the brain is inherently fascinating - it is, after all, you. Learning how it works - what it's made of, how its structure determines its function, literally what you can think, and make and do - is powerful, and often actionable information.

We are thrilled about talking with you today, because we believe that our partnership approach can be widely implemented. Universities with research and education programs in neuroscience, art colleges, organizations, and vibrant arts communities can use our experience to contribute to similar educational efforts in many parts of the country.

Thank you for this opportunity!