

Talking points for Margi Brown **before Joint Rules Committee on SB 822**

Good afternoon. Co-chairs, vice-chairs, and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Margi Brown and I am a member of Stand for Children and the grandparent of two children in Portland Public Schools.

I am here today to oppose SB 822.

I want to start by saying I believe PERS reforms should be fair to retirees but also make the system sustainable and dependable for future government employees. Once we have fair, impactful, PERS reforms, we can begin to hire teachers back, reduce class sizes and bring back classes like music and PE. We need reforms to help our schools get back on their feet.

SB 822 is a great first step in that direction, but it is only a first step. We believe the legislature must go further to address the total PERS liability. While there are other proposals that reduce the liability by nearly \$10 billion, SB 822 only reduces the liability by \$3 billion.

We want our schools to be able to begin to hire back teachers, have smaller class sizes, and more classes available to open our children's minds to new experiences and better prepare them for the future needs of our economy. We cannot do this without really addressing the PERS liability.

If this legislature can pass meaningful reforms, we can start down the path to restoring and rejuvenating our schools. If we do not act now, in a meaningful way, we are ensuring that today's toddlers go to schools that will continue to struggle to provide a mediocre education. We have disinvested in public education in Oregon for too long, so we have a lot of catching up to do. Partial adjustments will not be enough.

Thank you for your time and attention on this important issue.