March 30, 2015

Dear Members of the Committee

I am here to testify in support of HB 2940, which is an effort to gauge the value of tax exemptions for private business. As a physical therapist that worked in the Beaverton School District for over 30 years, I have witnessed firsthand the cutbacks in school funding that have occurred over my career and how they have impacted the services provided to education. I have always had a difficult time understanding why businesses of any type are granted property and other tax incentives to locate and do business in Oregon when weighed against the services that are needed to properly educate our students. I understand that Oregon will expend 1.6 billion to fund tax breaks and incentives for private businesses in Oregon for the 2013 – 2015 biennium alone. Perhaps if that amount of money would be expended on schools for the same biennium, we would not have the situation Oregon educational system is currently in. For example, in the Lake Oswego School District, there are now only 171 instructional days per year, which ranks in the lower half in the nation.

So I want to know why so much tax revenue is forfeited on behalf of private business while are schools continue to struggle to provide an education to the future business owners of this state. And I want to know if these breaks for businesses are worth it.

HB 2940 would help the people of Oregon know how much money the people of Oregon are giving up to support business and help explain why Oregon is 47th among the 50 states in funding higher education. More importantly, the people of Oregon need to know whether cutting the number of instructional days to three weeks fewer than the national average is worth the cost of providing these tax incentives.

Oregon taxpayers have a right to know if our public resources invested in the business community are worth it. This can only be accomplished through the transparency that this bill would mandate. I urge you to vote in favor of House Bill 2940. Thank you.

Thank you.

Ann M. Jorling