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April 22, 2019

RE: House Bill 3263

Chair Doherty and members of the committee:

For the record my name is Carla Piluso, and I proudly represent House District 50, the great city of Gresham. I have also served on the Gresham-Barlow School Board for the last ten years.

We know that high-quality school libraries lead to better outcomes for kids, and that those benefits are biggest for disadvantaged kids.

But school libraries in Oregon are too often swept to the side by competing priorities. As a school board member, I know that balancing the budget often means just trying to keep your head above water. But when GBSB has only two certified teaching librarians for nearly 12,000 students, that's not fair to the classified staff who pick up the slack, or to the students who are missing out on quality instruction.

We can't lose track of what strong libraries represent: an opportunity to support kids and families on their path to success.

House Bill 3263 would have guided districts towards developing stronger school libraries, aligning our schools with the existing statute, which mandates strong standards for school libraries.

HB 3263 did not move forward this session, but we as a legislative body should continue thinking about how we can make sure school libraries are a priority. Given the months of conversations we've had in the Capitol about how our schools can better serve our students, now is a good time to talk about the role libraries can play.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Sincerely,

Carla C. Piluso
Oregon State Representative, House District 50