

**From:** [Erica Brannon](#)  
**To:** [JWMCC Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** PERS Cuts  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 14, 2019 2:58:56 PM

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Good Afternoon,

My name is Erica Brannon. I am a 10th grade Biology teacher working in Bend, Oregon and an OPSRP PERS member. I'm 26 years old, have been teaching for four years, and I love being able to see the impact I make on my students every day both academically and by supporting them through the tough teenage years. Being a teacher is a rewarding job, but I also need to support myself financially. I am doing the best I can to plan for my retirement someday, but **SB 1049** harms my retirement security by making unaffordable cuts to my individual account program. According to PERS analysis, as an OPSRP member my IAP would be cut by 7.1%. People like me hired after OPSRP was created are not the cause of the state's pension debt. The 2003 system was designed to be sustainable and it is. But now you are asking me to take a cut to pay a debt I had nothing to do with creating. This is, in essence, a tax on my retirement benefits to pay the state's obligation to retirees. These cuts are unfair, illegal and hurt working people like me. I show up to work every day and do my job. I have kept my end of the deal. I urge you to vote **NO** on **SB 1049** and keep your promise to people like me.

Further, if **SB 1049** passes we will see a rush of retirements. In education, having consistency among grade and content level teams is crucial for student success. It is already hard to recruit and retain qualified educators when wages in Washington are 20% more than the Portland metro area and earn 22% per week less than private sector according to recent analysis by the Oregon Center for Public Policy. Many of us have second jobs just to make ends meet. Teachers pay for supplies out of pocket, are dealing with some of the largest classroom sizes in the country. I have classes of 37 10th graders. Some students sit on folding chairs because I do not have enough chairs in my classroom to seat them all. We do this work because we believe in our students and want to be there for them. We have accepted lower salaries and difficult working conditions and last week you saw us turnout in force not for ourselves, but for our students. But in exchange for lower salaries, we were promised a secure retirement and over the past 20 years that has been chipped away. **SB 1049** asks us to take a further reduction.

Again, please vote **NO** on **SB 1049**. This will help keep young, passionate, highly-qualified teachers like myself in our school buildings, supporting our students, and creating a better future for Oregon.

Thank you,

Erica Brannon  
Biology 1 Teacher  
Bend Senior High School