

From: [Laurie Walsh](#)
To: [JWMCC Exhibits](#)
Subject: PERS ROBBERY
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 5:47:50 PM

To My **Representatives** in Oregon:

In 2001 I moved to Bend, Oregon and was hired to start teaching in 2002. Yes, yes I did become a teacher in Oregon in the worst of times.

Year after year we lost student-contact days. We lost pay. There have been years that we didn't even get COLA. And still, more was expected of us every year so that our students could succeed.

I stayed in Oregon for my daughter and for my students and their families with the optimism that things would get better. Year after year we were promised that, "... we will make it up to you when the economy improves in Oregon."

And now, finally, our state is financially in the black, and what do you all want to do? CUT MY RETIREMENT?! Because of the past years of inadequate funding, I've lost thousands of dollars from my salary and subsequently, I've lost retirement funds as well.

My contract included retirement benefits. Are you all now breaking your contract to me? It's unethical and cruel.

I am Tier 2 in PERS and now I'm looking at a 12.5% reduction in my IAP?! How can you do that to us?! Why do we teachers have to pay YET AGAIN for others' failings?!

I am a single parent and have struggled to make a living and pay my bills in Bend. But now I have to worry about my retirement too?! I had already steeled my resolve to work until I was 62, but now...?! How long must I give my blood, sweat, and tears to my students before I can AFFORD TO RETIRE?!

Teaching is taxing, exhausting, and takes every ounce of your being to be effective. I have given my all to my students and families for years; I've spent thousands of dollars of my own money over the years to continue to grow as an educator by getting a master's degree and completing summer institutes and trainings.

I've also spent thousands of dollars of my own money to make sure that my students have the books, supplies, and other things that we need in our classroom. (Don't get me started on the last time our district had a social studies textbook adoption! For years I purchased materials for my students and for instruction out of my own pocket because of the lack of adequate textbooks.)

I have been an educator (in and out of Oregon) since 1990. This is the FIRST TIME in my career I have regretted becoming a teacher. It really breaks my heart to write that.

My love for the students and teaching won't sustain me through retirement ... the cuts to PERS are personal and feel like a big ol' slap in the face.

As a (former) mentor teacher in our district, we heard over and over how hard it is to retain teachers, and that teachers are leaving the profession because of stress, workload, poor salaries, and lack of benefits. Where is the long-term vision of our leaders?! Why would the state of Oregon once again abuse the people that are educating our future in Oregon and expect to recruit teachers?! It's absolutely ludicrous.

Now I am actively seeking teaching assignments outside of Oregon ... I'm sure I'm not the only one. Washington state treats their teachers with dignity and respect; I'm looking there as well. (Wages in Washington are 20% more than the Portland metro area and we earn 22% PER WEEK less than the private sector!!)

I show up to work every day and do my job REALLY WELL. 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.

Sincerely,
Laurie Walsh
Bend LaPine School Teacher