

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod and Senate Committee on Rules members,

I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 2001, which targets seniority with undefined merit during teacher lay-offs.

I am parent of three children in the Salem-Keizer School District and spouse to a career educator with 25 years of service in the same district. We knew that a career in education would offer less salary than the private sector but decided that the 1973 Public Employee Bargaining Act would guarantee more stability and security.

House Bill 2001 threatens those plans. Sponsored by Stand for Children Oregon, the bill reveals a concerning pattern of outside interests influencing education policy at all levels.

Stand for Children contributed to at least 32 school board candidates in this election. Thousands of dollars have changed hands between Stand for Children Oregon PAC and Stand for Children, Inc., a 501c4 nonprofit contracting with districts and the state.

Elected school board officials endorsed by Stand for Children Oregon actively supported the bill. The Eugene School Board Chair said the following on April 21, 2021:

"Social change is not easy, but it's something we need to do and think about. I can't help but think part of the remarkable thing about the verdict yesterday in Minneapolis was that the (police) union did not win again. The union did not win again in enforcing and keeping the good old boy network in place, and that's sort of what's going on here with looking at how we retain teachers of color, and we do all strategies, but doing nothing is not the answer in my opinion."

The chair later apologized for her statements.

Bill Sizemore tried to displace teacher seniority with undefined merit using the initiative process in 2000 and 2008. It failed, miserably. Twice. But now somehow, in 2021, teacher seniority is being displaced by undefined merit legislatively, with little or no resistance.

In reference to restorative justice, I have difficulty believing that teacher seniority is the offending policy.

Senators, I ask you to honor collective bargaining and vote no on House Bill 2001.

<https://friendsofross.org/stand-for-children-targets-teacher-seniority-again-may-4/>
Merit over teacher seniority: Stand for Children's influence on school board chair backfires
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyjsRpyqsak>

Ross Swartzendruber
Salem-Keizer parent