

Good Afternoon, Chair Dembrow and committee members, for the record, my name is Tia MacIsaac, I'm a resident of Keizer, OR and I have worked for the Salem Keizer Public Schools for 16 years and the last 14 years at Hayesville Elementary in a K-5 Learning Resource Classroom as a Special Programs IA or a paraprofessional. Through the years we have had caseloads within our classroom at almost 40 students. With that many students, the Special Education Teachers has voluminous amounts of paperwork, meeting with families, teachers, and building administrators. This tremendous amount of work causes a lot of day-to-day instruction to fall onto the lap of paraeducators like myself. Without having paraeducators in the classroom a special education teacher would have to work another 6 plus hours daily to meet the demands of the job. I have always spent my entire day with small group instruction of students that are in special education. When caseloads are this high students are often placed into groups, not by similar goals or levels, but at a time that grade level or when they aren't at PE, Music, Media, lunch, or recess. This often makes for larger small groups with 7 to 9 children in a group for instruction in writing, math, or reading. Because they are not similarly grouped, teaching to their individual IEP goals becomes a laborious task. Many students aren't getting the individualized attention that they need and desire. Then add to the demands of Special Teachers and Paras have with the growing challenges of students with extreme behaviors. In the last 5 to 6 years the impact of generational poverty and students living in trauma-filled environments has led to a greater demand for the staff's time in this special education classroom to deal with violent behaviors.. It is not uncommon to have to do a room clear of my classroom multiple times a day, 3 to 4 times a week this causing even more demand of the special education teachers time. The ability to negotiate a caseload cap in some districts in Washington State has allowed for smaller caseloads which in turn allows for smaller group size, more individualized attention to students, and the ability to work 1:1 with students who are in crisis. I know firsthand that Oregon is losing some of its new Special Education teachers to Washington. My own daughter graduated 2 years ago from PSU with a Master's in Special Education and didn't consider one Oregon school district when she was looking for her first Special Education job. Instead, she went to

work in Evergreen PS where they have a caseload cap and higher starting wages.