

Submitter: Elizabeth Cox
On Behalf Of: OSEA
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Ways and Means Committee members,

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve a low socio-economic demographic in a rural school district these past few years. It feels like good work in the world, and I am continuously impressed with the ways the district utilizes the funding they do have to serve the community. That said, I see the daily toil the staff experience when making their attempts to fulfill multiple duties. Many students and staff are struggling with their mental health as a result of myriad factors, not the least of which is the process of moving forward from the social and emotional ramifications of a global pandemic. In a small district, many employees, especially paraprofessionals, serve the community with insufficient pay, and work as a labor of love. Meeting the assessed budget of \$10.3 billion will directly benefit the staff and students of our public schools, especially our historically underfunded rural districts. Please lobby to increase the budget to the assessed need, rather than the \$9.9 billion. Thank you.