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April 17, 2023

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Walters and Reschke, and Members of the House Committee on Revenue:

I'm a proud PPS parent (of a first-grader who attends Vernon K-8), and I'm also an educator (as a faculty member at Portland Community College). This puts me in the unique position of someone who observes the effects of educational resources for students - or the lack thereof - in a personal and a professional way. Both deeply matter to me.

I'm writing to urge you to support HB 3221 because the current statutory limit on local option levies has not kept pace with inflation, nor explosive growth in property values. Between 2017 to 2022, PPS general fund expenditures grew by approximately 18%, yet the applicable limit only increased by 3% annually. Although future projections will be informed by several factors, early projections show that PPS general fund expenditures will grow by approximately 20% over the next five years. Our available capacity has gotten narrower and narrower over the past three years, and the existing law gives no room to expand collections to deal with inflation or limitations on state funding.

The local option levy funds support hundreds of valuable teaching positions in the district each year, but as we all know the challenges for our kids are many. Schools, and the students in them, need a variety of resources including greater access to mental health professionals like school counselors, smaller class sizes, and stronger educational support to close inequitable learning gaps.

It's crucial that we listen to the will of the voters, and offer the ability to expand collections from local option levies. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hannah Love, PhD