

April 17, 2023

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

My name is Jennifer Stewart, and I am the parent of two Portland public school students. They are about to wrap-up their eighth and fifth grade years.

I'm writing to share my support of HB 3221. As you know, Oregon's public schools have been chronically and purposefully under-funded by state legislatures for many years. My understanding is that HB 3221 could provide an avenue for raising additional funds from property taxes for public schools, which are desperately needed. I would like to take a moment to share with you how Oregon's current funding for public schools is serving our neighborhood middle school.

With not enough teachers to go around, my son's middle school classes are over-crowded. With class sizes of up to 40 students, he does not get to conduct experiments or benefit from hands-on learning in science class, not to mention the lack of funding for those supplies. Similarly, language arts classes at his grade level also approach 40-students per class. As such, there are no hand-written assignments, essays or quizzes. Electives at the school have been reduced to a mere trickle. His gym class took place in a portable classroom with holes in the wall, a peeling linoleum floor, without even a dedicated gym teacher. My son's education is suffering due to underfunding and appropriate staffing levels, and HB 3221 provides an option to begin to rectify Oregon's public school funding crisis. I ask for your help. Our kids are way behind, and it is getting worse every year.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for your considerations.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Stewart
Parent, Portland Public Schools