

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 322 Feb 24, 2025

Senate Bill 322 supports Continuity and consistency which are needed in the classroom. On Friday I showed up for a job with elementary students where I was given the wrong name of the teacher and could not access any seating chart because it could not be found in the computer. The name of the job did not match the name of the teacher. When I went to gather them at the cafeteria no one knew the name of the teacher so it was hard to find the class. The rest of the day was the classic movie of a crazy classroom. At the end of the day, the office let me know that they had gone through 8 substitutes and had finally found one last Monday—lack of consistency. When I needed the students to calm down, I asked the students to put their heads down and I would release the tables one by one, I was told they did not do this—lack of consistent rules and habits. SB322 encourages a substitute teacher with a restricted license to get a substitute license so the teacher can take a long-term assignment without having to work 9 days and take one day off to follow the state rules. There should never be a reason that elementary students have 8 substitutes while their teacher is on leave. There will never be any consistency or continuity. The rules will change every day and the students will be confused. No one will know who is working. Every new face of a teacher will strike fear and chaos.

Training - teachers will have access to classroom management techniques so that they will have access to best practices. Trained teachers have the experience of visiting teachers in their practicums and observing effective classroom management skills. SB 322 encourages the development of training modules that help substitutes become better teachers. Trial and error is part of learning but should not be part of teaching. An untrained substitute teacher will not have the skills needed to manage the chaos in this classroom. SB322 helps provide training to substitute teachers so that they can develop skills that work in the classroom. 8 substitutes for this classroom is a sign of frustrated teachers. This chaos is stealing from the future of the students. My morning was spent with wonderful classrooms that had present teachers who provided consistency and order. Students knew the rules and were comfortable with their teacher being gone. SB322 is an investment in the learning environment of students. Teachers need time off and learning should continue when a substitute comes in. SB 322 provides training and a pathway for teachers with restricted licenses to be able to take over classes with no time off. Same teacher every day.

SB322 also introduces the concept of due process in the form of a handbook of rules. Situations like having a medical red eye condition like blepharitis should not be confused with being drunk, or tripping on a backpack is a lack of classroom management. A teacher in one school shows a movie during lunch and is banned from another school for the same activity. If the parking lot has potholes and the teacher gets her shoes wet and cannot teach all day with wet shoes, or leaves a coffee ring on the desk should not be a reason to fire an educator. Handbooks should clearly define the school rules.

Lastly, one of the number one reasons why substitute teachers leave the profession is the lack of medical insurance. I have substitute taught part-time since 1981 but I had another part-time

job that paid my health insurance. My children were able to go to the doctor when they were sick. Teachers often have families and if they work full time they will not be eligible for the Oregon Health Plan. Having access to medical insurance will encourage substitute teachers to work full-time and not keep their income low to qualify for state poverty benefits. I encourage you to support SB 322 and support an office of substitute teachers to address the professionalism of teachers who provide substitute services.

Sincerely yours,

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