

Testimony in Support of Oregon SB 323

Presented by Kimberly Mandel

I am Kimberly Mandel, a certified teacher with 20 years of experience who has chosen to pursue substitute teaching as a career. Having taught full-time, I have a well-rounded understanding of what a thriving school community should look like. I was raised in Portland, lived in Europe and other states, and currently enjoy rural life here in Coos County.

As a member of the Oregon Substitute Teacher Association (OSTA), I have come across substantial data showing that outsourcing substitute teachers is not cost-effective in several ways. Valuable taxpayer money should not be spent outside of Oregon for substitute services. School districts often have to draw down on a lump sum and are later told they must pay more to maintain an adequate substitute pool until the end of the school year. Additionally, many dedicated, future PERS recipients, like myself, become ineligible to earn PERS. Instead, districts pay private companies both staffing fees and contributions for 401 K plans that replace our PERS retirement plan. A private company has a bottom line, and our Oregon students and taxpayers should not be beholden to it.

Substitute teachers play a crucial role in a child's life. Although we may not be present every day, we forge lasting relationships and bonds with students over time. A child will spend at least 10% of their school career with a substitute teacher. We are integral to a school's functionality and contribute significantly to promoting lifelong learning for students in our communities.

Many community-minded individuals with a heart for children have joined me in the substitute pool to positively impact Oregon students' futures. Oregon's students and the substitutes who serve them deserve, at a minimum, a thorough scrutiny of the out-of-state companies that would take over such a critical part of running our schools.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of SB 323.