

Submitter: Sophie von Rohr
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3652

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sophie von Rohr, and I am a substitute teacher in Portland Public Schools as well as a substitute representative to the Portland Association of Teachers.

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 3652, which would make class size and caseloads a mandatory subject of collective bargaining in all Oregon schools. Too-large classes is one of the biggest problems facing teachers— both regular contract teachers and substitutes like me—and one of the biggest barriers students in Portland are facing to a quality education.

It's very simple, when classes are small, I can treat my students as individuals and as humans, every day, in every decision, in every lesson. When class sizes are large, it's simply not possible to give students the attention they need and deserve.

Consider:

Oregon ranks 8th highest in class sizes nationwide. Large class sizes reduce student engagement, lower academic performance, and increase stress for both students and educators.

Smaller class sizes improve student outcomes. Research, including the Tennessee STAR study, confirms that students in smaller classes perform better academically and are more likely to graduate.

Overcrowding hurts vulnerable students the most. Students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and low-income students benefit the most from smaller class sizes and lower student-to-teacher ratios.

Educator burnout is real. Excessive caseloads and large class sizes contribute to high turnover rates and negatively impact student learning.

This bill ensures class size and caseloads are negotiated. Educators should have the ability to advocate for reasonable class sizes and caseloads at the bargaining table.

No cost, no mandate. HB 3652 does not require specific class size or caseload reductions—just a fair conversation in contract negotiations.

Public and educator support is strong. Surveys consistently show that reducing class sizes is a top priority for parents, students, and educators.

It is essential that we talk about class sizes. It has never been more important to protect public education in this country. If we continue to push class sizes larger and larger, if we refuse to even open the conversation with teachers, families, and students, who know we need smaller classes in order to learn, then we will continue to push our public education systems to the brink. It's time to invest in our kids and what we all know is right for them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sophie von Rohr

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Substitute Teacher, PAT Rep