

Dear Chair Neron, and Members of the Committee,

March 4, 2025

I am writing in strong support of HB 3652, which would make class size and caseloads a mandatory subject of collective bargaining in all Oregon schools.

Since moving to Oregon in 2020 after retiring as a high school teacher in Georgia, I have worked as a certified teacher and substitute in the Portland Public Schools system. In Georgia, class sizes were capped at 28 students per class. When I began substituting in Oregon, I was dismayed to find classes routinely have 35 or more students. I cannot overstate the burden oversized classes place on teachers, limiting their ability to provide individualized attention to struggling students and making it nearly impossible to offer meaningful feedback on assignments due to the sheer number of students.

Two years ago, I took a month-long substitute assignment at a Portland middle school, where every class had at least 32 students. The challenges of oversized classes are particularly pronounced at the middle school level. In every class, multiple students had behavioral issues, and in such large groups, their disruptions were acutely difficult to manage. Struggling students—especially at this age—often act out in frustration or as a defense mechanism to mask academic struggles. Immature students often feed off the behavior of others and class decorum can become untenable. In overcrowded classrooms, teachers lack the time and frankly, energy to address individual needs, allowing disruptions to spiral and making it difficult to maintain a productive learning environment. These withering conditions also make it difficult to retain quality teachers in our schools.

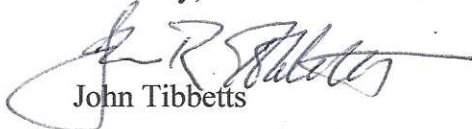
While I understand HB 3652 does not impose class size caps, I find it astonishing that Oregon schools are not required to include class sizes in their contract negotiations. During last year's contract negotiations in Portland, nearly every teacher I spoke with expected class size to be addressed—yet negotiators were unable to have the matter addressed.

The quality of education in Oregon is suffering due to oversized classes. This issue, coupled with Oregon's chronic underfunding of education, demands legislative action. If school funding shortages persist, districts will have no choice but to cut teaching positions, further increasing class sizes, and deepening the crisis.

I urge you to support HB 3652 to ensure that class size can be negotiated as part of teachers' contracts. Oregon's students and teachers deserve better.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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