

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

My name is Kelly Deatherage, and I am middle school intervention teacher at Gresham-Barlow. 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.

The general public may believe that the Covid-19 epidemic is over, but upper elementary and middle school teachers know we are still suffering. The students in these grades missed a great deal of foundational reading and writing instruction, as well as the important socialization that occurs in the early grades. Now, these students--many highly impacted from those early deficits--are routinely in classes of 30+ students.

It's very difficult for skilled teachers to effectively differentiate lessons and manage behaviors in classes of that size, much more so when the class is made of students with greater-than-usual needs. Coupled with that reality is the fact that many of our toughest schools have extremely high staff turnover so that those most needy schools have the least experienced and skilled teachers.

I fear that without required bargaining around class size and caseloads, many districts will prefer to sidestep this vital, but complicated, issue.

We're failing our kids by cramming them into large classes. Please support HB 3652!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Deatherage
Gresham-Barlow