

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

My name is Greg Howells, and I am Special education teacher at Springfield District 19. 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.

Large class sizes combined with students who are struggling with learning and/or whose families may be living in poverty and/or may have a multitude of other difficulties affecting home life along with the stress of a society that feels less secure, less cohesive, less like community makes for a challenging environment for teachers to teach and students to learn.

Smaller class sizes help in many ways, but two ways in particular stand out to me. In general, smaller class sizes provide a calmer, less stressful environment, and one which allows for better student engagement. It also provides a less stressful environment for teachers to teach. Teaching is a difficult job, maybe now more so than ever. The stress of working with a large number of students, many with behavioral issues and/or learning issues, is a cause of teacher burnout. Teachers need to have learning environments in which teachers are at their best and feel good about what they are doing and how they are impacting the students they teach.

Please support HB 3652 and help create schools that give teachers and students the type of environment that provides better success and happier students and teachers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Howells
Springfield District 19