

Submitter: Aubrey Pagenstecher

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3652

My name is Aubrey Pagenstecher, and I am a Certified Media Specialist in Portland Public Schools. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3652, a bill that creates an opportunity for us to address the critical issue of class size and caseload limits for educators, including media specialists like myself. This bill is essential to ensure that educators and other school-based professionals can effectively serve students and support their learning needs.

As a Media Specialist, my role encompasses a variety of responsibilities aimed at fostering a rich learning environment in the library media center. I provide instruction to students in grades K-5 to cover a wide array of topics, including digital citizenship, media literacy, research skills, and the proper use of library resources. I help students develop important academic skills, such as study habits, independence in learning, and the ability to critically evaluate information. In addition to teaching, I work to create a welcoming and engaging atmosphere in the media center and ensure that our collection supports the curriculum and meets students' diverse needs.

The positive impact of professional librarians on student literacy achievement is well-documented. Studies show that students who have access to a professionally-staffed library consistently perform better in reading and writing. Librarians not only help students find the resources they need but also foster a love of reading and critical thinking that has lasting academic benefits. However, when budgets are tight, professionals like me are often the first to be cut, despite the clear value we provide.

I serve as the sole media specialist at two schools, so in addition to serving 600+ students and over 50 staff members, I am essentially running two small library branches. At Woodmere, a Title I school with a culturally and linguistically diverse student body, I only see my students two days a week. As if their access wasn't limited enough by inadequate staffing, my Monday classes are frequently canceled due to holidays and grading days. This results in nearly 8 hours less library time for those students each year. This limited access further exacerbates disparities in educational resources, particularly for those students who rely on our library services the most.

Without class size and caseload limits, it has become impossible to provide the learning experiences all of our students need to thrive. HB 3652 ensures that class size and caseloads are a part of the negotiation process early on, allowing for important discussions that prioritize student learning and educator well-being. It is

vital that we have the resources and time to meet the needs of our students.

I urge you to support HB 3652, as it is a crucial step in ensuring that all students in Oregon have access to high-quality education and the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.