



Testimony in Support of HB 3652

March 5, 2025

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

My name is Lesly Munoz, and I am honored to serve as the State Representative for House District 22, which includes Woodburn, Gervais, Brooks and North Salem.

I am proud to be a chief sponsor of HB 3652. For the past 15 years, I have served as a labor representative, responsible for negotiating, bargaining, and enforcing contracts on behalf of thousands of workers. In the context of bargaining, issues are categorized into three district types:

1. **Mandatory Subjects of Bargaining:** These are issues that must be addressed and negotiated at the bargaining table.
2. **Permissive Subjects of Bargaining:** These are matters that can be discussed if both parties mutually agree to include them in the negotiation process.
3. **Prohibited Subjects of Bargaining:** These are issues that cannot be discussed at the bargaining table, including matters that are illegal or violate legal standards.

For the past five years, I have worked as a labor representative for educators across the state. It is refreshing to see so many legislators on the dais who have participated in school district bargaining and have first-hand negotiation experience.

In 2021, Senate President Wagner and many others championed SB 580 which allowed class size and caseload to be mandatory subjects of collective bargaining in Title 1 schools. It was done just in time to avert a deeper crisis for our most vulnerable students. It is time to include all schools as Oregon continues to rank among the highest- class sizes in the nation.

This is a critical issue where Oregon students face a significant obstacle to success. It is essential that we consider the solutions teachers are telling us they need when we are struggling to keep educators engaged in their professions. We cannot keep asking educators for feedback and discount their expertise when they share it. This is not the time to tell educators, “No, you cannot discuss class size and case load even if your professional expertise tells us, it must be considered.” According to educators across the state, class size and caseloads directly impact workload and should not be excluded from mandatory negotiations subjects.

I want to address some concerns you might hear about this bill:

- You may hear that districts can address class size through other means, such as the Student Investment Account (SIA) established by the Student Success Act. However, this argument is comparing apples to oranges. SIA grants constitute only about 5% of a district’s resources and are intended to be additive funds meant for use after a community discussion about unique local needs. These funds are not designed to manage the overall



learning environment across an entire district. This bill on the other hand, allows for a conversation about the 75% of a district's general fund that affects the daily learning environment of students.

- You might hear many concerns about fiscal impact claiming this could cost money. This bill does not cost any money. This bill gives educators the right to discuss this issue with their district to advocate for class size and case load. It eliminates unilateral decisions around this essential topic, bringing the voices of our knowledgeable educators to the table for discussion. Conversations are free, and there is no requirement for a specific outcome. This bill does not mandate a conclusion or agreement of any kind— that outcome reached during discussions in bargaining. So, any cost would have to be negotiated at the bargaining table within the district's means, as it is now.
- You might hear this bill could lead to more strikes, when in my perspective it could help avoid them. As someone who has bargained many contracts, I can tell you when conversations that are deeply and widely felt by the community are delayed and denied, it can lead to breakdowns in communication. This bill would support substantive conversations happening earlier and could avoid future strikes. I believe this will lend itself to a more productive and thoughtful bargaining process. Woodburn, for example is made up of Title 1 schools entirely. This means that class size and case loads are a mandatory subject in that district, yet this did not lead to a strike. Instead, it led to a creative solution that was within the district's means, was bargained, implemented, and has been in place for the last couple of years. Having followed this bargaining process, I can assure you, all Oregon school systems stand to benefit from making the decision to allow this topic of conversation in bargaining.
- Some critics might say this bill would mandate local conversations, and I assure you, it will not. This bill does not pre-ordain a decision, agreement, or solution. This bill ensures ideas for solutions are discussed. In Woodburn, for example a committee composed of administrators and educators work together on an as-needed basis to troubleshoot and resolve issues related to class size and caseload, drawing from options negotiated at the bargaining table. This process allows for timely and thoughtful solutions, upholds local control, and fosters community decision-making. This bill creates an opportunity to start looking at this issue early and with time. It also upholds our Oregon values of affirming local control to communities and giving them the power to make decisions for themselves.
- You might hear that declining enrollment means class sizes are already shrinking. This is misleading. While some districts have seen enrollment declines, class sizes remain too large in many schools. Without bargaining rights, districts can respond to lower enrollment by reducing staff instead of actually lowering class sizes—meaning students still end up in overcrowded classrooms

Let's give all educators the chance to have conversations about a central aspect of their workload and pass HB 3652 and make class size and caseloads a mandatory subject of bargaining. I would

LESLY MUÑOZ
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 22



encourage the members of this committee to look on OLIS and read the currently over 80 personal stories from educational workers beyond classroom teachers, from special education teachers to school nurses to counselors in support of this bill to hear what those serving our schools think of this essential need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.