

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson, and McIntire

I am Tyler Scialo-Lakeberg a high school social studies teacher in Salem Keizer Schools for 26 years and currently serving as the full time release President for the Salem Keizer Education Association.

Last spring we settled our contract after a year of continuous negotiations. One of the main topics was class size. Due to current legislation making class size a mandatory subject of bargaining for Title I schools our District did engage on this topic as we are a district with many Title I schools. That discussion is not guaranteed for all schools. HWe narrowly circumvented a strike because we were able to bargain class sizes and made some gains in this area.

I've served on bargaining teams for the past 12 years and this was the first time the District engaged in these conversations. That is why this legislation is needed. The conversation should not be denied.

Smaller class sizes are the key to student success. Research shows that when students have better access to their teacher and more individualized attention they perform better. In addition, smaller class sizes have proven to reduce student behaviors. For example, after distance learning, classrooms were divided into cohorts and only half of the students met at once. It was reported from around our district how student behaviors were not an issue. Teachers said that they were able to give students the attention they needed, students were less triggered with fewer students in the room and teachers were able to intervene early when a student was escalating and prevent huge blow outs. In a district that is leading the state in student caused injuries and learning constantly being disrupted by students with high needs, this is saying a lot. And yet we are fighting to just have the discussion regarding class size.

Class sizes are a huge part of working conditions. In a time of more and more teachers leaving the profession due to unsustainable workload, class size matters. And we cannot forget that our working conditions are our student learning conditions.

Class size must be a part of any bargaining discussion. Oregon is among the few states with the highest class size and yet we worry about poor student outcomes and lower graduation rates. Let's put our attention and efforts to the real issue, which is class sizes.

I urge this committee to pass HB 3652 and make class size a mandatory subject of bargaining for all schools.

Thank you.