

Submitter: Magan Smith  
On Behalf Of: Myself and those I support at Roosevelt Middle  
Committee: House Committee On Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

I am Magan Smith, a Special Education assistant at Roosevelt Middle School in Eugene. I started working in education 6 months after graduating from college with degrees in criminal justice and political science. Education became an opportunity to uplift students in an attempt to prevent labeling theory and the school to prison pipeline. Helping students feel empowered and less stigmatized through the power of their mind is extremely rewarding, but it's not enough to ignore the systemic struggles my school community faces everyday. Roosevelt Middle has an amazing Access Center that focuses on empowering all students while assisting and providing in-class push in support for students on IEP's. The biggest issue we face is staffing. I have been at Roosevelt for a year and a half, during this time I have seen 6 special education assistants leave for other opportunities that are less demanding and more compensating. We do not have enough aid to provide the necessary amount of support our students are needing. My school is fortunate and has funding for many SPED assistant positions, but those positions go unfilled due to the low paying wages. I, as well as multiple colleagues, leave school everyday and go to our part time jobs. I bartend 2-3 nights out of the week and will go to school the next morning exhausted after my 16 hour work days. While it is crucial to acknowledge and re-adjust the budget, it would be a disservice to ignore the SPED professionals and teachers who deserve more compensation from this proposal. Adding additional funding to SPED services will do nothing if the professionals are paid poorly and exhausted from their other jobs. As we focus on what students need, the needs of educators that support these students must to be addressed. Give the students more funding and give the educators a better wage. Educators (licensed and classified) deserve more respect and that respect starts from the top.