

Submitter: Lawrence Robertson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Dylan Robertson and I'm a ? teacher in WLWV school district. I am here to advocate for fully funding special education bills HB2953 and HB2448, and for increasing the state school fund above the 11.36 billion in the GRB.

Now, I imagine that you've probably heard a few people this year advocating for additional education funding, and that this is not the first year you've heard this message. I also know that you have seen reports that show that Oregon is lagging behind in student learning outcomes compared to most other states.

Both these things can be true, that we need a consistent, high level of funding, as well as a clear plan to achieve outcomes we all can be proud of. Asking for the first without the second is irresponsible; asking for the second without the first is wish-casting, hoping for something that we are not willing to pay for.

This is a huge, complex problem that will take years of sustained progress to achieve a strong, healthy education system. This year, though, right now, we need to stabilize our system, try to keep it from bleeding out. Because, with the recommended budget and the PERS liability, a lot of districts are facing devastating cuts. The recommended budget isn't setting us up to improve outcomes, it is almost guaranteeing we won't. My district cut 75 teaching positions last month, including all of our reading specialists, a lot of teaching assistants, and many teachers. We can't make huge cuts and talk realistically about improving outcomes. Districts across Oregon are facing the same grim reality.

I know the Oregon has many needs. Education is unique in that it is integral to improving so many of them, but now and in the future: homelessness, poverty, violence, incarceration, racial justice, economic opportunity, etc. So I ask that you please fully fund HB2953 and HB2448 and increase the state school fund ABOVE the 11.36 billion.

And after this year's budget comes out, let's have that conversation about improving funding and outcomes. Let's make a real plan over the next 5 years that sets specific, yearly goals for funding and outcomes.