

Submitter:

Thuynga Barr

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB2900

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Webber, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Thuynga Barr, and I'm a licensed k-12 special education teacher here in Oregon. I'd like to begin with a haiku that captures the arc of my professional journey:

Since Twenty Thirteen
Two states, five districts, eight schools
Probation No More

I've spent over a decade in the classroom, across multiple states, districts, and schools—all while raising school-age children of my own. As a special education teacher, I've worked closely with multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students navigating trauma. I've mentored colleagues, led family engagement efforts, and stayed long after hours to make sure kids felt seen, safe, and supported.

And yet—every time I've moved districts, I've had to restart a new three-year probationary period. No matter my record, no matter my experience. I've had to prove myself all over again.

This bill, HB 2900A, is deeply personal for me. The last time I relocated in 2021, I almost had to turn down a job offer because I couldn't find housing. I wanted to teach. I had the skills. But I couldn't secure a place to live in time. It's hard to feel like part of a community when every move sets your life back to zero.

Three years is a long time to keep your life on hold. Educators won't buy a home and won't plant roots. People won't speak up the way they want to, because we know the stakes of being non-renewed during that period are high. There's an unspoken rule: keep your head down, do the work, and don't draw attention to yourself. But that kind of silence can come at a cost, especially when what needs to be said is on behalf of students and the community we serve.

With this bill, administrators retain their full administrative rights regardless of probation. For educators, we're not even asking for that, we're asking for just cause protections after we've already demonstrated our ability and dedication in another Oregon school district.

HB 2900A doesn't go as far as I think it should. Two years is still a long time, but it's

a compromise, and it's a step in the right direction. It acknowledges that educators like me, who have completed our initial probation, deserve a shorter path to stability when we move districts. It also respects local control by allowing districts to reduce that timeline even further, if they choose.

There are licensed teachers all over Oregon, many that I know personally, who have stepped away from the classroom, not because they didn't love teaching, but because the cycle of restarting probation again and again wore them down.

Please vote yes on HB 2900A. Thank you for your time.