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Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Wright and Hudson, members of the committee, thank you for having me today to talk about HB 2703. For the record, my name is Kyndall Mason, and I work for the Oregon Education Association. We represent more than 41,000 educators, classified staff, and specialists in Oregon's public K-12 and Community College systems.

I am here today to talk about our support for HB 2703. There are several members here who can talk about class size and caseload with an expertise that I do not have. What I'd like to touch on is what the act of being able to bargain both class size and caseload means to educators, and to students, in Oregon.

We know that there is no silver bullet to resolve the issues we are up against in public education, but class size and caseload are two subjects that get at the core. In 2021, the legislature passed SB 580, which made caseload and class size mandatory subjects of bargaining, but only at Title 1 schools. What we've learned in the years since is that the very act of being able to have class size and caseload on the table at bargaining sessions meant that educators got to have meaningful conversations about the conditions inside their classroom and the weight of their caseloads, directly with districts. We also learned that unless deemed a mandatory subject of bargaining, there is no guarantee the issue will be discussed in any meaningful way.

We are asking that the legislature consider the impact intentional conversation can have on our classroom environments. We know that kids, and educators, succeed when conditions in the classroom, and on educator workloads are manageable. Being able to bargain around those subjects, allows the space for creative solutions to rise to the top. These conversations have not always resulted in more educators, and smaller classrooms, as nice as that would be.

What it means is that educators can simply implore a bargaining strategy that includes the totality of the conditions they are working in, and their students are trying to learn in. Perhaps budgets will prevent more educators. Perhaps facility constraints prevent additional classrooms. But creative solutions are what our members do best, and when given the opportunity they have managed to create support networks and systems that make improvements possible.

If we want to change the environments that our students are learning in, then we need to be able to talk about the actual environments our students are in. On behalf of educators, and our students, we ask that you pass HB 2703, to expand the right to bargain class size and caseload from Title 1 schools, to all schools. Thank you for your time today.

Kyndall Mason, Public Affairs Consultant, Oregon Education Association