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Esteemed Committee Members,

My Name is Julie O'Dwyer and I live in rural Redland in Oregon City. I'm here in support of creating a robust and funded Rainy Day Reserve to improve the stability of school funding, and in hopes that reforming the Kicker would also help us begin to improve our investment in public education in this state.

First, I'd like to talk about how unstable school funding has affected my son's education. In his first 3 years of Elementary school, we were shocked to learn budget cuts meant no Programs for PE, Music or Library. Although PE and Music returned for a couple of years the PE position was cut again by the time his little sister started school, the music teacher had become part time and the Librarian position has never been replaced. During the last 3 years of my son's elementary education, he was in a classroom of 37, 38 and 39 kids respectively. Like many parents, we felt our son was gifted although he never tested as such. I sensed that he was bored in the classroom. Then, at his first 6th grade conference, the teacher told us that, in all his years of teaching, he could not recall having a student with the reading skills of a college senior. I wondered, was his intellect potential being stunted by class size?

This frustrated Mom went to the principal and asked what we could do for this child and others like him in a class of 39 students. Our principal contacted a retired high school math teacher to assist in pulling out high achieving 6th grade students once a week to begin advanced algebra studies. The payoff was fully realized when we attended the Oregon City High School Honors banquet in the spring of our son's senior year. I looked around the room and by far the majority of the kids there to be honored as the cream of the crop had been students in that pull out math class from Redland Elementary. And our son, having been one of two achieving a 4.0 GPA for all four years of High School, was Valedictorian and will graduate this May with a Biochemistry degree from Lewis and Clark College. "Success" you say? For a few perhaps, but what for those who fell through the cracks in unmanageable sized classes? Or continue to? Not much has changed.

When I got involved in the Coalition for School Funding Now! In 1998, I had no idea I'd be in front of you 13 years later as a member of Stand for Children still asking you to address the stability of school funding issue. It makes me wonder how many kids weren't lucky enough to have an advocate or a tenacious parent such as my son's and have been shorted a great education in Oregon because **we still haven't solved this problem....**

I urge you....No, I *Implore* you, to convince your colleagues in both bodies here in the Capitol to finally establish a real Rainy Day Fund so that we can stop further increases to class sizes and give every single child in this state the education they deserve – for their future and yours.

Thank you in advance for reaching across the aisle to see this request finally comes to fruition in this session.

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