



March 27, 2013

Representative Komp Testimony on **House Bill 3082**

Chair Greenlick and Healthcare Committee Members. For the record my name is Betty Komp and I represent House District 22. That's Woodburn, Gervais and N. Salem.

Dental decay is one of the most common chronic diseases worldwide. In the United States it is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Risk factors for dental decay include living in poverty, poor education, low socioeconomic status, and having a developmental disability.

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence relating to the overall health of children and the direct relationship to the maintenance of their dental hygiene. In the '06-'07 school year a study was conducted, called the Smile Survey, that revealed some sobering statistics. I'd like to share some of those with you here today so that you can have a better idea of why this is such an important issue. More than one in three children in Oregon need treatment for tooth decay. At the time of the survey, an estimated 27 percent of Oregon's children had not seen a dentist in the previous year.

Often times, especially in low-income school districts, access to proper dental information on dental care can be scarce. Low-income children suffer from poorer oral health and lower access to care. Compared with those in the highest income bracket, children in the lowest bracket suffer twice the rate of untreated decay, almost three times the rate of rampant decay, and are 30 percent less likely to have seen a dentist in the previous year.

The most alarming fact I read is that these numbers are getting worse. Compared with a survey conducted five years earlier, Oregon scored worse in every major measure of oral health for children. The proportion of school children with untreated decay increased by 49 percent.

HB 3082 requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules requiring provision on fluoride rinse for students after meals with parent permission. This bill requires that the names of dentists be solicited in schools that provide services at a reduced rate. This school-based program would help children all over Oregon who need better dental care. It would create the opportunity for partnership between dental health professionals and our schools which will only benefit a worsening situation. This bill will help students attend school with less pain, and be able to focus on learning. I urge your support.