



Testimony HB 2506
April 1, 2013
House Revenue Committee

For the record, my name is Betty Komp and I serve as State Representative of House District 22, Woodburn, Gervais, Brooks and North Salem.

For ten years the question that I am asked almost daily is why do you work so hard to be a State Representative? I come to you this morning to answer why.

Being a person whose district is one of the highest in poverty whose community is seeking justice and the opportunity to have a good life, the solution for them and our State is equity in education funding.

Having been a budget committee member, school board member in the 1980's my basic understanding of the value of the dollar and politics intersected. Little did I know that the challenge of asking our district patrons for an annual school-funding budget was the easiest method to meet our staff, students, and my own children's education.

Since that time, our State has undergone major change. We have a funding formula, we have numerous "carve outs," we have Measure 50 that limits our funding by property tax—which by the way was to be the answer of all answers for equitable funding—that now has put us into funding crisis after crisis, called compression.

How did we lose sight of our vision? Was it No Child Left Behind; is it not all about funding; or is it about how you use the dollars that we have?

Having grown up in poverty, raising four daughters on very limited funds has taught me that the dollar is not the answer in many situations. When I was a principal in a low performing school, we didn't have any more money than our sister middle schools, what we had was a staff that said we can do better. They taught me the power of politics in decision making. It is those students who taught me that learning how to read at the middle school level is not about money, but the opportunity to learn and read about their passions for life.

Our school success is available in the student testing data system at the Oregon Department of Education. But it does not tell the story. An assumption can be made about how we spent our funding, but there is nothing to correlate it to research and great teaching. This is why I run campaign-after-targeted-campaign is to address education funding and student success.

It is time to say that having 30% of Oregon's students drop out is not acceptable. It is time to say, students in residential mental health facilities deserve an education; it is time to say our students in elementary schools are learning science, by the way they are not currently; it is time to say students are being encouraged and given time to exercise their bodies as well as their minds, and it is time to say students are given the right to learn at their rate and level.

The past eight years of my life has been filled with politics as a legislator, not the major reason for my journey—to reach equitable funding support for all Oregon's students. This is about the 60 year old that is finishing a bachelor's degree, to an infant we met a week ago in our Education Ways and Means Sub Committee who is not going to live past the age of 2 ½. It is about our responsibility, our knowledge, and our leadership to ensure equity in learning at all stages of life.

I ask for your support in passing HB 2506, so we can evaluate, analyze and provide a report to the 2015 Legislative body the best funding options available to us in the 21st Century with the dollars we do have.

Thank you.