

June 26, 2013

Oregon State Legislature  
House Committee on Rules

Dear Committee Members,

I have several concerns with SB 600. The first is the authorization of a “**city**” to petition a change to the boundary of a school district without the input and consent of the two school districts and the citizens of the communities involved. A city does not have the knowledge base in education and how school districts operate to make a sound decision in changing a boundary. In addition, the citizens of the affected districts must have a say in the process. School districts are not bound by postal zip code or city boundaries regardless of the name of the district. There are literally hundreds of examples just in the Portland Metro region!

My other concerns are with the specifics of the bill itself. There is **no provision for public input** in any phase and specifically none is allowed by the boundary board (Section 5). The bill then specifically states that **no remonstrance petition or election is allowed** thus eliminating an avenue for the taxpayer citizens directly affected to have input. This lack of input in a matter that financially impacts a taxpayer is problematic and possibly has legal ramifications.

In addition, I have concerns with the following areas:

**Section 2** states that a city must find the (boundary)change would:

- A.** Decrease the total transportation costs of the affected school districts.
  - 1. Is this measured by the current situation?
  - 2. Or is it measured on what is projected?
  - 3. Who makes this projection, the very city which wants the change?
- B.** Result in greater efficiencies in the delivery of educational services?
  - 1. What specifically is a city to measure?
  - 2. Is this based on current or projected?
  - 3. Does this take into account the long-range facility planning already completed by a district? School districts spend money on demographic studies and purchasing of land for future needs.

In **Section 3 part d**, the bill states that the petition contains a proposal for the distribution of assets and liabilities of the area.

- 1. This speaks to the financial impact to residents of both districts without an opportunity for public input.
- 2. In addition, if an piece of property or a building owned by a school district was involved, somehow the receiving district would need to pay the citizens of the other district. Most districts do not have assets to pay for land or a building and rely on bond levies to purchase.

**Section 6** addresses employees of a school affected. It states employees may elect to transfer to the new district without loss of seniority or accumulated sick leave. The new district must accept these

employees. Employees are under labor union contracts in the district they are employed. I am guessing this is not as simple as it sounds and this area may also be subject to a legal challenge.

A school boundary change is a complex decision that affects more than any residents of the specific area. These effects include:

- Community – A school brings together residents in its boundary area regardless of postal code. The residents do activities together both directly related to the school as well as those not related. An example is youth sports which are generally associated with the high school for which the community draws. Another is scout programs.
- Financial – Residents of the entire district take on debts for bonds and levies. When a portion of district is broken off either the residents continue paying debts for a bond/levy that does not benefit them or the remaining residents must take on a larger burden.
- Planning – School districts continually plan for 10 – 20 years in the future in terms of infrastructure. If a city is allowed to interrupt this process, it will result in waste and loss of resources

Lastly, this bill appears to have been written to specifically address a situation in the South Cooper Mountain area in which a group of developers believe land needs to be moved from the Hillsboro School District. The initial set of petitions by a developer land owner were soundly rejected by the community at large. A more recent attempt to convince the Hillsboro School District(HSD) was also rejected.

Currently there are 241 acres in the South Cooper Mountain UGB that are part of HSD. Based on Metro's density ratio for the area, there will be approximately 941 students. In addition, 550 adjacent acres in UGB reserves are in HSD and will result in almost 2000 more students. Regardless of which district this land is in, a new school(s) will need to be built. HSD has stated that this area has been part of their long-term facility planning.

As the situation currently stands, two students live in the affected area. HSD runs a bus down Tile Flat Rd. where these students reside and will need continue to run a bus on that road for the other students in the area even if the land is put in a different district. The new district would then have to run a bus down that road as well. There is no current savings in transportation. Future savings would be subject to interpretation based on plans for either district to build new schools in the area.

The bill is not in the best interest of taxpayers and I ask that you do not support this bill.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to talk further.

Sincerely,

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