

Dear Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee:

I am a teacher in the 4J Public Schools. I am planning on retiring from my teacher career in 6 years. As a public educator, I have been in service to my students, parents, and community at large. I have advanced degrees and have worked in education, and the private sector. I was widowed in 1992 and returned to teaching at that time, realizing that this was my true life's calling. I have now worked as a physical educator and health educator for approximately 17 years. As one who has chosen teaching and the service to others that I do, I can tell you that I am extremely disappointed that there is talk of balancing the budget on the backs of PERS members. As educators, we have already faced enormous class sizes, mandates that make additional work load, and budget cuts. We have lost contract days, remained at earning steps, and earned no Cost of Living Adjustments. We have chosen our careers of service (along with nurses, firefighters, and other front line workers) not because of the earnings we receive, but because we have been called to service. Our working years' pay reflects this. And now, due to circumstances we have not created, we are being used to balance the budget. We are middle class, we are hard workers, and we have bought into a system that gave us promises for the future, including a secure retirement. It is not fair to rely on us to give up more than we already have. PLEASE, find another way to go about the task of creating revenue. Please stand up for educators and our retirees. Pursue new revenue from corporations and the wealthy, instead of pursuing revenue from those of us who have already given so much. Perhaps another way to create revenue would be to create a luxury sales tax. Taxing corporations and the truly wealthy fairly, and, even, a sales tax would be equitable ways to create revenue. Thank you for your concern.

Sincerely,

Nanci McChesney-Henry
Eugene, OR