

Testimony presented by OSBA President Terry Lenchitsky

Co-Chair Komp, Co-Chair Monroe and members of the Committee:

Good morning. My name is Terry Lenchitsky and I have been a member of the Oregon Trail School Board for 24 years. It is my privilege to serve as the President of the Oregon School Boards Association. OSBA represents about 1400 locally elected school board members across our great state.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to urge you to provide the very best budget possible for our public schools. Our members are extremely encouraged by the increased investment in education of \$6.75 billion put forward by the Co-Chairs of Ways and Means.

Without this level of investment, too many districts and schools in our state will have to go through yet another round of painful budget reductions that will shortchange our ability to prepare students to be good citizens ready to take their next step in life, whether it is on to college or the start of a career. Without this increased investment I fear that the "40-40-20" efforts will just be another failed educational reform relegated to the dustbin of history.

I spent over 30 years as a business owner and I am proud to have passed my HVAC business on to my son. I am absolutely convinced that a strong public school system is the key to a strong economy in Oregon. As a businessman, I also recognize that improved outcomes and innovation require investment. And in Oregon over the past decade, all too often, we have not been able to make those necessary investments to increase student achievement and spur education innovation. And I have been

particularly dismayed at how this has decimated our career and technical training programs in our high schools and middle schools.

School districts across Oregon have made numerous cuts to their programs, employees and school days over the last several years in order to balance their budgets. In my district this year we have 8 furlough days for our teachers and we can no longer provide a 3rd or 4th year for our students studying a foreign language. These are just a few examples of educational opportunities that have been lost for our students.

Our children and grandchildren have paid the price for these recent education cuts. The Co-chairs budget represents a needed boost in funding after a decade long decrease in the share of general fund and lottery revenues going to our schools. We know this budget will still mean some districts will have to tighten their belts again, but it is a step in the right direction. We applaud the co-chairs' efforts and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks to make this budget a reality for our schools. Thank you for your time and attention today.