

**Testimony before the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
Public Hearing on SB5519
Courtney Clements - Lake Oswego Parent
March 13, 2013**

Dear Subcommittee Members,

I attended the public hearing on March 12, 2013 but was unable to speak and cannot return on March 13, so I respectfully submit my written testimony concerning SB5519.

As a parent in the Lake Oswego school district and a member of Stand for Children, I am deeply concerned about the future of my community's schools as well as the future of education in our state.

While I am pleased with the proposed education budget of \$6.75B, I ask that you work thoughtfully to achieve this number so that you can maintain or better yet, increase it beyond this biennium. Parents and concerned citizens will not only be looking at this number, but at what goes into it. As you know, a major portion of school district budgets is the PERS contribution rate, which for many districts is doubling between 2009 and 2015. This rate, according to OSBA analyses, will continue to grow in the foreseeable future with double digit increases, much faster than either revenue or non-PERS expenditures. PERS must be addressed thoughtfully and thoroughly. Without reasonable long-term modifications to PERS, it will continue to impact education budgets and our students and our state adversely.

Under the governor's proposed budget of \$6.15B, my district is slated to end the 2014-15 school year at a deficit because of increased PERS costs as well as compression. We are looking at cutting \$6m over the next three years. You know that means fewer teachers, fewer electives, and scaled-down programs. As I said earlier, I am deeply concerned about my neighbors like Beaverton who are facing even more severe consequences.

One answer, is, of course, revenue reform (property tax adjustments, sales tax implementation, income tax reform). However, I do not believe that this is not possible (read: palatable to the voters) without addressing expenditures.

So, I respectfully request, that as you work through the budget proposals, you please remain cognizant not only of the impact of your decisions on the forthcoming biennium, but on the next six biennia to ensure that the entering class of kindergarteners graduates in twelve years ready to succeed as business owners, employees and citizens of our state.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Courtney A. Clements
Lake Oswego, OR