



**Carla C. Piluso**  
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Date: February 23, 2015  
To: Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee  
From: Carla C. Piluso, State Representative, House District 50  
RE: House Bill 2928

Chair Doherty and Fellow Members of the Education Committee,

For the record, my name in Carla C. Piluso, I am the Representative from House District 50, the great city of Gresham and part of SE Portland.

I am here today, along with my colleague Representative Susan McClain, to ask for your support of HB 2928. This bill would establish a task force to address and identify solutions to excessively large class sizes in our schools across the state.

As many of you know, I sit on the Gresham-Barlow School Board, where I am serving my second term. During my time on the board, this issue has increasingly become the cause of stress not only on our school administrations and budget, our educators and classified staff, but also the educational experience and success of the students we serve.

Oregon has good reason to take the time and take a closer look at class sizes in our state. Oregon currently has the third largest class sizes in the nation<sup>1</sup>. Class sizes in Oregon's elementary schools has risen almost 20% and in our high schools nearly 29%, just between the years of 2009-2011 alone<sup>2</sup>. Within the tri-county area, in Gresham, North Clackamas, Beaverton and Hillsboro, most elementary students were assigned to classes with 29 students or more in 2013.

So why such an emphasis on class sizes? In a research study done by the US Department of Education, they concluded that reducing class sizes is one of few proven evidence-based reforms that increase student achievement.

When there are fewer students to a class room, we increase the likelihood of success for both our teachers and our students. Small classes decrease strain on our educators, making it more likely for school districts to attract and retain excellent teachers. In the Gresham-Barlow School District, we are seeing an increasing number of teachers transferring to other districts—many who have taught in our district for years—because they are being worn down by large classes.

Although the legislature is working to reverse the trend of disinvestment in education, there is no hiding from the fact that class sizes in Oregon are too high. Whether we hear from parents at a school board meeting, from my conversations over the summer with my constituents, or from community members that have spoken to me at events in my district, there is no education issue of greater importance to families in my district than reducing class sizes. I would suspect that this rings true for many of my colleagues here today as well.

The Gresham-Barlow School District's motto is "Every Student Prepared for Success". I am here today because I believe we should make that promise to every child in Oregon. This bill takes an important step toward fulfilling that promise; I urge your support for HB 2928.

Carla C. Piluso  
State Representative  
House District 50

<sup>1</sup> Site: The Oregonian (May 2011, Sept. 2012); Oregon Daily Emerald (June 2008)

<sup>2</sup> Site: COSA/OASBO School Budget Survey, Sept. 2009, 2010, 2011