

TO: Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee

My testimony is in opposition to HB 2657. This is a scheme based on a premise that by threatening schools with their funding, you can get fewer absentees. I am all for programs that will reduce absentees, but using funding as a threat is unethical and not how parents want their schools funded.

To deal with absenteeism with threats of reduced funding is contrary to what it will take to get kids to want to come to class. We need more classroom funding that allows more specialized instruction to engage those that tend to skip school. The consequences of this bill are too many and too severe to take a chance on uncharted grounds.

If funding is to have an affect on attendance, it should be in the form of additional grants to administer special programs that are specific to that schools problem. If a school is in a poor neighborhood with a lot of depressed unemployed parents that don't get their kids to school, a special program is needed to educate those parents on instilling responsibility into students. Same if the school has gangs that are so threatening to kids that they skip school. That school needs special funding to address that problem. But, withholding funds won't give the school the means to correct their problem. Withholding funds will only aspirate the problems and have the opposite results that are desired.

Then there is the public health issue. Many kids with illness issues exceed the allowed excused days. So to accommodate valid excuses, you start making exceptions. Like most dramatic changes, the exceptions get the funding right back where it was before the change with one exception – there is a whole lot more paper work to get back to where it started from, which in turn means more work, more payable man hours, more tracking all for nothing.

I am appalled at Representative Komp's remark that implies she can call-in enough favors to get this bill passed. Good or bad, she wants to use our education system for her own experiment. We deserve better. To be manipulated to vote for an experiment when the logic says it goes in the wrong direction is a violation of the oath you took. Don't we want our schools to succeed? This bill is not a step towards success.

Please vote NO on HB 2657.

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As A Mom
Radical Moms of Oregon