

Estimated Senate Committee on Education,

As your constituent, I urge you to do everything possible to keep funding for public schools at a level that ensures quality education for all Oregonians. As a native of Finland, now a naturalized US citizen, I understand the importance of balancing all social needs that a state has to provide. I also know how my native country pulled itself up by its bootstraps after the Second World War: Investing in forestry, heavy industry, and education.

The investment in education meant that all citizens had (and still have) free schooling through all levels, including college, as well as free school lunches and free school healthcare (dental, too). As the old industries - forestry and heavy industry - as well as agricultural jobs faded away, the importance of investment in education became all the more clear. New, educated generations arose to move the country forward, to invent new industries, to start new companies - and there was a labor force ready for those new jobs, with the educational background needed for them. This was only possible because the state had taken decisive action to provide the opportunity for quality education to all citizens.

Finland is now listed on the top of many rankings in equality, standard of living, education, and happiness. It all stems from creating a society that gives all of its members an equal chance at succeeding, regardless of their parents' income level or status in society. I want to make sure Oregon makes the right choice about public schools, and I urge you to do your utmost to keep funding at an appropriate level for all of our students.

Thank you.
Your Respectfully,

Aino Tolme
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