

Please support HB 2830 and the rest of the revenue reform package proposed by Speaker Kotek.

I am currently reaching the end of two terms of service on the Salem-Keizer School Board and during my eight years of service we have cut programs five times. The years we have been able to add back have come nowhere near restoring what has been cut. The net result is that our district is in far worse shape now that when I was first elected – not what I had hoped for my tenure.

Our average class sizes from Kindergarten to 12th grade are at least five students too high. The curriculum, staff development, and administrative support for the classroom is inadequate – we hear at the board level often from staff needing better support. Our classified staff is bare-bones resulting in classroom not being clean and routine maintenance deferred. This is no way to educate our future workforce and citizenry!

We must fix our taxing system. The reduction in percentage of income tax paid by businesses in our state has declined over the past thirty years so it only makes sense to find a way to get back to business paying a fair share of the burden. This proposal does that in a manner that has found success in several other states. Even if it means some of that cost being passed on to consumers, I say, let's do it!

My only fear is trading it off with a further reduction in deferred compensation for public employees. My mother, a librarian in a city library, used to say, "If you want to get fat, don't feed at the public trough." Public employees get that. But they have known, in the past, that at least they wouldn't be destitute in their retirement. It has been shown over and over that the quality of instruction has the highest correlation with student growth. If we must cut that benefit in order to pass this package, public salaries must be competitive with the private sector so that public employees can afford to save on their own for retirement. Otherwise those high-quality people will not go into public service. Our current teacher shortage will get worse.

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