

Testimony in favor of HB2830

Celeste Pellicci

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Good Afternoon Senator Hass and Representative Barnhart and members of the Joint Committee on Tax Reform. My name is Celeste Pellicci. I am an 8th grade science and health teacher at Kraxberger Middle school in Gladstone School District. Gladstone is a tiny district in the Portland metro area, and we have been chronically underfunded for most, if not all, of the 12 years I have been there.

At the peak of the last recession, we had 18 furlough days, and the year after that, 15 furlough days. All in all, the 8th graders I teach lost more than 50 days of school. It shows. Our test scores this year are the worst they have ever been. We had tough decisions to make at that time--do we let our class sizes climb into the 40s after cutting teachers or keep class sizes lower but with less instruction time? We chose the latter--both were terrible. These are decisions we will have to make again in the next few years if we don't fix this problem with more revenue. This is the fruit of the tree that was planted 10 years ago, or more.

Education is not just teaching kids in a classroom. My kids bring the challenges of their home lives to school every day. As a teacher, I must learn each kid and how to reach them individually. This is next to impossible with 35 kids in a room. My kids need health services, mental health services, family services, homes, food, and elective classes that excite them. We need revenue for wraparound services, for lower class sizes, counselors, instructional assistants, CTE classes and more. Many of our wraparound services with community partnerships are funded by the state budget.

But I am not just here for the piece of the education pie. I am here for all pieces of the pie. Our kids and their families need accessible health care, mental health and addiction services. When we have healthy families we have healthy schools. We need more revenue for all parts of the pie. We need corporations to contribute more to the healthy and skilled workforce they want to see come out of our schools.

Thank you for your time.