

Taylor Q. Bacon  
6/13/17  
HB 2830

Members of the committee, My name is Taylor Q. Bacon I work at one of Oregon's leading providers of mental health services for children. The work that we do is so important both for the families we serve directly and for the broader community we live in. By helping children, we can avoid the costs of untreated mental illness that are present in far too many of our communities today.

I love to watch the clients improve throughout their journey at the Parry Center. When I was young I found solace in talking with the lunch room workers, it was therapeutic for me while I was having some problems with depression. Now I get to be that person, providing insight into real world worries. I only hope that I provide the same level of comfort and understanding that I received when I needed it. It is the most beautiful thing in the world helping a child to regain the trust in adults that has been destroyed by the trauma they have endured. I hope that children leave knowing that they can at least trust me.

We're heartened to see Speaker Kotek and Senator Hass leading on revenue reform and pushing to make our tax system more equitable. We applaud their efforts and their progress, and we ask them to do even more - because while their proposal means progress, it's not enough to adequately fund schools and services in Oregon.

The Legislature's most important job this session is to pass a game-changing revenue package that will strengthen our schools, increase access to childcare, health care, higher education, and help lift Oregon's children and families up. We should also be expanding access to mental health services to address the issues I spoke of earlier. But right now Oregon is facing budget cuts that will reduce access to services for children. I am worried that the current budget proposal will result in Oregon rolling back the progress we have made on mental health, and the opportunity to do more will slip through our fingers.

With deep federal cuts looming and our schools still nearly \$2 billion short of being fully funded, it's more important than ever that legislators push for game-changing revenue. Anything less risks maintaining our inadequate status quo and allows the crisis in our schools and family services to deepen. We can't keep

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perpetuating this cycle of piecemeal budgeting and program cuts. Every life lost to untreated mental illness reflects on our state's failure to adequately fund these vital services.