

Lindsey Dance
Testimony for 1-13 hearing

My name is Lindsay Dance and I am a public school teacher. I am an OPSRP member, which means I receive the lowest level of retirement benefit. I live in SE Portland, in Senator Taylor's district.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you today.

I teach Spanish at West Tualatin View school in Beaverton. I have six classes totally about 140 children – from kindergarten to fifth grade - every day. I find the work extremely rewarding. I love working with the children, helping them get excited about learning a second language.

I did not go into public service for the money or for financial reward. As such, my salary does not have much room to save for retirement. I thought that was okay because I had the promise of my PERS benefit. I thought it made financial sense to sacrifice salary today knowing that I would have retirement security later.

I do not know how I could possibly afford to continue teaching in a scenario where my future retirement benefits were to be cut thirty to forty percent. There is no way I can make up those losses with my salary.

I have heard people here in Salem praise these shocking reductions as a means to hire more teachers in the classrooms.

I do not mean to be disrespectful, but is just flat out wrong. These cuts will mean fewer, not more, teachers in the classroom because like me, young and eager teachers will have to look elsewhere for their careers. It is already difficult to retain talented people.

I am here to ask you: please do not do this. I appreciate that you have difficult choices, but I was hired long after the PERS reforms. Me and my PERS cohort are not burdening the system.

Please do not make it impossible for me to continue working with children in the profession that I love.

Please do not force the state into another round of expensive and lengthy lawsuits that will create uncertainty and could make things worse.

Please do not break your contract to provide a secure retirement for teachers like me.

Thank you.