



February 27, 2018

Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is LeeAnn Larsen. I am a member of the Beaverton School Board and I write today in my capacity as President of the Oregon School Board Association Board of Directors.

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I write to oppose HB 4113. I do believe that some class sizes in the state of Oregon are too large. However, this bill is not the answer. HB 4113 is about money, and there is not enough money in the K-12 system to lower class size to a level that will make a significant impact on students. There is not enough money in the K-12 system to fund the programs and investments that we need to close the achievement gap and to support the most vulnerable students in our districts. There is not enough money in our K12 system. It is lacking \$1.8 billion to fund the QEM.

As you know 80-90% of our school budgets fund our teachers and staff. If districts are required to lower class sizes, the only option they will have is to cut into their programs or to cut days. Neither one of these options are good for our students. We are just beginning to see our student achievement data show improvement for our most vulnerable students as a result of the investments that we have been making since the end of the Great Recession. To require districts to put these funds toward lower class sizes would not be in the best interest of our students.

HB 4113 will lead to more labor strife. It will put districts at a disadvantage at the bargaining table. Class size is already a permissive subject of collective bargaining and some of our districts, i.e. Portland Public Schools, take advantage of this. But requiring that class size be a mandatory subject at the bargaining table undermines the local control that our districts enjoy. Some districts have made the hard choices to endure larger class sizes in order to invest in programs that their community values, or to invest in programs that raise their student achievement, including Career Technical Education classes or extra supports for certain students. This bill will eat away at the local control that our districts and communities desire.

HB 4113 will make the playing field of negotiations uneven. I know our districts will hire more teachers when there are more resources available.

As you know, anyone can find research on both sides of the class size issue. The one thing that everyone agrees upon is that the most important thing we can do to raise student achievement is to put a highly qualified instructor in the classroom. Let's put our efforts into issues that will make the most difference for our students. Let's figure out how to encourage the best and brightest to want to become teachers. Let's figure out how to fully fund the K12 system through revenue reform, cost containment and accountability.

Our kids are counting on us to make their K12 experience the best it can be and HB 4113 is not the answer. The losers of this bill will be the students and children of Oregon.

Thank for the opportunity to share with you my opposition to HB 4113.