

Good afternoon, Chair Dembrow and committee members, for the record, my name is Bradley Cole and I am a social studies and student council teacher in the North Clackamas School District in Clackamas Oregon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you all today.

I had originally written a testimony about the deleterious effects of class sizes on educational outcomes for my students. I am uniquely positioned to comment on this as I have extremely large class sizes for a social studies teacher with nearly 40 students per class and a caseload of 275+ students. My original testimony also captured the voices of my students who talked about the stress, difficulty and fear they face in such huge classes. I have submitted that testimony for your individual review.

However, I believe my time today is better spent addressing a central concern brought up by those opposed to senate bill 580 - that it would somehow be a barrier to equitable practices in Oregon school districts. These fears are misguided and I'd like to tell you why.

To begin with, opponents of this bill argued that allowing for collective bargaining around class sizes would hurt our ability to continue to close the graduation and achievement gap for historically underrepresented groups. However, this fails to take into account what created many of these inequitable outcomes in the first place - which is large class sizes. And the preponderance of evidence - most notably a comprehensive review of 112 studies done on class sizes by Professor David Zyngier - shows that lowering class sizes is one of the most effective ways to raise achievement for culturally, economically and linguistically disenfranchised communities.

Second, let's value returns on the aggregate versus success in corner cases. Opponents of this bill from the Oregon School Board Association offered some anecdotal evidence about how they are given more flexibility without the constraints of collective bargaining around class sizes. For example, choosing to overload PE and advanced calculus classes to reduce classes that target minority students. While laudable, this is something that is done on a school by school or case by case basis and is not mandated nor is it necessarily being scaled across Oregon. What we know from the overwhelming evidence is that on the aggregate Oregon minority students would benefit from reduced class sizes. We have a much better chance to have equitable outcomes for all students across the state of Oregon with the passage of this bill, rather than a smaller percentage of students who just happen to have the right administrator making the right calls.

Third, to suggest that teachers won't come to the bargaining table with equity front and center is just not based in fact. For example, teachers and administrators at NCSd have worked tremendously hard to increase our graduation rates nearly 20% and, of particular note, eliminated the gap in graduation rates between black, hispanic and white students. As educators we have been on the front lines of this equity work and it is close to our hearts. To suggest that collective bargaining would somehow mutually exclude this equity work assumes that teachers, and our union, are not equally committed to equity. When in fact it is because of our commitment to equity that we are strongly urging you to vote in favor of this bill.

Zyngier, D. (2014). Class size and academic results, with a focus on children from culturally, linguistically and economically disenfranchised communities. *Evidence Base*, 2014(1), 1 - 23.

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