

Carole Sebens
In support of HB3130

Dear Representative Paul Holvey and members of the Business and Labor House 2021, Regular Session,

I am a resident of Stayton, Oregon and past substitute teacher. I currently work part-time as a Volunteer Recruitment Specialist for the Oregon Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

I am writing in support of HB3130 because of the impact that outsourcing substitute teachers had on my personal PERS retirement account and the schools in my local community.

After working for Polk County for several years, I quit to stay home with my children while they were young. We then decided to become foster parents, eventually adopting twins. When they became old enough to go to school, I decided to go back to work and chose substitute teaching due to the flexibility and because it was a way to build up my PERS. The first year I was certified, I didn't have enough hours for PERS, so I called to find out what I needed to get a contribution for the next year. I made it my goal to work over 600 hours to get a PERS contribution.

I was pleased because by the end of 2017, I had worked over the number of hours I needed so would get a PERS contribution. I waited for my statement, but when it arrived, there was no additional contribution. I called PERS, and had my pay stubs in front of me. That was when I discovered that when two of the districts I worked for switched to EduStaff, my time was no longer PERS eligible. When I signed up with EduStaff, they made no mention of this whatsoever. They made it sound like an accounting issue that just made everything easier for the districts and me. I was about 60 hours short. Had I known, I could have chosen not to work for the districts that switched. When I realized this (mid-year), I switched my preferred districts and chose to only work for Scio and Mill City, the two districts in my area that had not made the switch. I then also decided it was time to look for a job elsewhere so I would get PERS benefits.

At the end of 2018, I began working part-time for the State. I continued to sub at Scio and Mill City on my days off until Covid hit, at which time I chose to let my license lapse. I am no longer certified as a substitute teacher, but I am sharing my story so that you know the impact on education is going to be significant, as I am sure there are others like me.

Please consider giving back PERS benefits to substitute teachers and other substitute staff. Our schools and students have been hit hard by issues out of their control. I think it's time make substitute teachers valued and compensated in a way that makes them stay. This is something you can control, and the benefits outweigh the cost.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my personal story. Please support HB 3130, not just for me, but for students who need quality staff.