



123 NE 3rd Ave.
Suite 208
Portland, OR 97232

betteroregon.org

May 17, 2021

Chair Paul Holvey
Vice-Chair Daniel Bonham
Vice-Chair Dacia Grayber
Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor

RE: SB 580 - Relating to Class Sizes and Collective Bargaining

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Bonham, Vice-Chair Grayber, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Foundations for a Better Oregon (FBO), I am writing to express concerns regarding SB 580. FBO advances Oregon's commitment to support every child to learn, grow, and thrive, and we believe SB 580 would hinder our state's progress toward an equitable and student-centered education system.

SB 580 would add class sizes and caseload limits as a mandatory subject during collective bargaining for all Oregon school districts. In some Oregon communities, reducing class sizes may indeed be a primary concern. **However, if a community believes investments like extended learning time, mentorship and tutoring, or culturally responsive mental health services may better serve students and educators, SB 580's call for universal class size reductions would leave little room for local priorities or more targeted equity investments.**

In the cases where reducing class sizes is a top priority for local students, families, and educators, Oregon already has mechanisms and resources in place to take significant action. The Student Success Act gives school districts a vehicle to invest in smaller class sizes when they determine, in partnership with community, that it's the best way to improve mental health or academic outcomes for underserved students. Moreover, Oregon law already allows class sizes and caseloads to be a subject of collective bargaining if both parties agree.

To ensure a shared and equitable recovery from historic wildfires and COVID-19, Oregon's education system must authentically engage disproportionately impacted students, families, and educators throughout the state. **SB 580, however, would put class sizes at the top of every school district's priority list, before communities even get to say what they need to thrive.**

I urge you to oppose SB 580, a one-size-fits-all solution that would prevent students, families, and communities from meaningfully shaping their school district's priorities and investments.

Sincerely,

Whitney Grubbs
Executive Director
Foundations for a Better Oregon

