

Submitter: Sarah Kester
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006
Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Kester, and I'm writing today in strong support of HB 5006.

At its core, this bill is about fiscal responsibility and readiness. It ensures that Oregon has the resources on hand to respond to urgent needs, invest in our workforce, and make good on promises to the people who keep this state running—from public employees to frontline workers in communities across Oregon.

Let's be clear: \$300 million for state employee compensation and \$75 million for non-state employees involved in collective bargaining isn't just a line item. It's a lifeline. It tells our workers: we see you, we value you, and we're committed to fair, competitive compensation. In a time when burnout and turnover are threatening the effectiveness of public services, this funding helps us hold the line.

While HB 5006 doesn't directly allocate dollars to schools, it sets aside crucial resources that could ultimately benefit Oregon's students and educators. The Emergency Board's \$50 million allocation gives the state flexibility to respond to unplanned needs—including those that arise in our school systems. Whether it's disaster response, staffing challenges, or supporting the agencies that work closely with public education, this bill lays the financial groundwork to act when and where it's needed most.

Some may balk at the numbers—but what's more expensive is delay, disinvestment, and dysfunction. This bill gives us tools, not just good intentions.

I urge you to pass HB 5006 and ensure Oregon is prepared, equitable, and resilient.

Thank you for your time and service.