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On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

This is my 12th year in education. I've taught in Madison, WI; Milwaukee, WI; and now, in Lake Oswego, OR. I've seen attempts at reaching struggling students fail time and again. It was not until I began working at Lake Oswego Senior High School that I witness a sustainable program for students with higher needs. LOHS serves students beyond the 11% funding cap on special education funds, and until now, has done so with the best interests of students at the center of every decision. Students with IEPs, 504s, and those who have academic and personal struggles that go undocumented all work within systems that serve them. Until now, I've recommended Oregon public schools, particularly LOSD to anyone with kids, especially those who have children with high needs. Because here, those students' needs are met with fidelity.

Until now. As we head toward a budget shortfall -- a shortfall the Oregon Legislature can prevent-- those programs that serve our students, especially the ones who need the most academic care, are going away. I worry for the future of those who are just learning about their own potential. Next year, they'll enter classrooms of 30+ other students. They will have less support outside of their core classes. They will no longer have trusted adults who have the capacity to work one-on-one or in small groups. Their teachers will be overwhelmed and overworked. This is not the way to close gaps in achievement. This is the way to grow disparities. Beyond all the ways in which our students will struggle, I will be looking for another job. Possibly one outside of education. Affected by my district's reduction in force, I was laid off due to low seniority. I have twelve years of experience scaffolding reading for students of all abilities, developing strong ties with families, and engaging struggling students in their academics. Your votes matter on education. Please fully fund our schools. Our students' futures are depending on you.