

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

My name is Selena Huggins. I'm a resident in Wilsonville, and I work for Wilsonville High School as an English teacher. I moved to Wilsonville almost two years ago, after teaching in Arizona for 10 years. As a teacher, I have been so much happier here than Arizona, as I've seen how education has been supported by the government and funding - such as the psychologist and mental health specialist, the number of special education coordinators we have, and more. This school has quickly become my family, with a community of warmth, respect, and kindness. Yesterday I received a RIF letter, as my position is being cut from the district because the proposed budget does not support enough teachers. I watched as 6 other colleagues came out of the office with tears on their faces because they received the same letter. Next month, they will make the cuts to classified staff as well. I am very concerned that the Governor's K-12 Budget will have a further negative impact Oregon students across the state as it has to my students, my colleagues, and me. The governor's proposed budget is not keeping up with cost of living, PERS costs, or health insurance costs. We need to provide robust funding for education in Oregon. The Governor's budget increase is approximately 11%, while economic costs come to closer to 15%. The spike in PERS rates adds further complications. As a result, our district and those across the state will shortly be cutting back services further. In our district, we will lose special education support, as our engagement specialist was RIF. We RIF a Spanish teacher, the only Chinese teacher, and the Robotics CTE teacher. The student - teacher ratio will be higher, as 2 language arts teachers, myself included, were RIF. Our school psychologist was RIF. K-12 funding needs to be significantly higher to keep up with costs, and to protect student access to special education supports, the robust CTE program, and keeping smaller class sizes. My heart breaks knowing that I will not be there to help support the students and other teachers whom I have built a community with for the past two years. I appreciate your listening and am happy to answer any questions you have about how this will impact my students.