

Hello Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue,

My name is Mary Kay Babcock. My pronouns are she/her/ella. I am the president of the Hillsboro Education Association, writing in opposition of SB125.

The Student Investment Account (SIA), funded by Oregon's Corporate Activities Tax, has been critical to helping our district begin addressing student needs — a crucial source of funding to help stabilize our schools after decades of underinvestment in the state school fund. With the SIA, our district prioritized investments in:

- Partnering with local providers to bring direct mental health services into schools
- Staffing Wellness Centers and hiring Care Coordinators, Psychologists, Student Success Coaches, and school nurses
- Developing curriculum and providing online training for culturally responsive and social-emotional learning

These investments reflect our community's commitment to student wellness and educational equity.

Still, the needs of our students continue to grow, and the current level of funding doesn't go far enough. We were only able to invest about one-third of what we had planned for reducing class sizes, hiring counselors, and improving student health and safety. Class sizes and caseloads remain high, and our educators are stretched thin trying to meet the increasingly complex needs of their students.

Special Education staffing is one of our most urgent challenges. Many of our Limited Support Specialist positions are part-time and hard to fill. These roles require training, consistency, and strong relationships with students, but high turnover and burnout make it nearly impossible to build that foundation. As a result, our most vulnerable students are left without the support they need, and staff are left to fill in the gaps without the resources to do so safely.

Now our district is facing even more cuts due to a recently announced \$20 million deficit: 67 licensed educators, 77 classified staff, 3 technology positions, and 2 administrators. These reductions will make it even harder to provide students with the support and services they need and deserve.

It is a false choice to pit education against healthcare. Oregon can and must fund both. Protecting and strengthening the SIA means preserving the critical progress we've made and ensuring schools don't slide even further backward.

If Oregon is serious about student success, the legislature must protect the SIA from further cuts and consider raising taxes on the largest corporations to give students the education and healthcare they deserve.