

Submitter:

Margaret Henry

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4125

As an advocate for students in the Portland Public School district, I am testifying in strong support of HB 4125 because our current revenue forecasting system is creating a 'feast-or-famine' cycle that is actively destabilizing our classrooms. We are currently facing a heartbreaking paradox: while the state of Oregon is preparing to issue a \$1.73 billion kicker refund, Portland Public Schools is simultaneously forced to patch a \$50 million budget gap by proposing the elimination of 288 staff positions, including 180 teachers and counselors. These are not just numbers on a spreadsheet; they represent the loss of reading specialists, the 'smooshing' of first and second graders into blended classrooms, and high school class sizes ballooning to 33 students per teacher. HB 4125 offers a necessary, evidence-based correction by mandating conservative, 10-year historical modeling and establishing a One-Time Emergencies and Finance Fund. This fund creates a vital fiscal shield that would allow the state to pay down PERS debt and support school districts during economic dips rather than triggering billion-dollar tax rebates while our local schools are in crisis. A \$400 kicker credit cannot compensate a child for the loss of their teacher or the erosion of their education, and I urge this committee to support HB 4125 to ensure our record-breaking state revenue finally prioritizes classroom stability over inaccurate forecasts