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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4125

Submitting written version of my oral testimony provided at the House Revenue Committee hearing 2/2/2025:

Thank you for having me here today. I am a parent to a first grader and rising kindergartner in Portland Public Schools, Co-Chair of the Duniway Advocacy Committee, and a policy professional who spent over 12 years working in state, federal, and local education policy as well as most recently on tax and appropriations policy at the federal level on behalf of families facing poverty. I am here today to speak in favor of HB4125 the Revenue Forecast Modernization Act and what it means for Oregon schoolchildren. I am here today on behalf of so many of these families who have started to feel like our children's ability to access their education depends on state economists' ability to make economic predictions to an unreasonable level of accuracy that almost feels like tarot card reading. Many of you have heard heartrending stories about what it means for Oregon families to be facing grossly underfunded schools. Today I want to tell a slightly different type of story, a story about a small ember of hope.

My first-grader, Theo, loved school when he was in preschool. He said all the time that he wanted to be a writer, a teacher, and a parent (because "you're allowed to be all three" he said). When he got to kindergarten, we lost a kindergarten teacher to budget cuts the week before school started. His class size went from an anticipated 14 children to 29 with only one adult. He has sensory differences and is neurodivergent and was immediately overwhelmed. He started having behavioral problems, it took everything for him to just get through the day masking and keeping himself together at school, let alone to even begin how to learn to read and write and do basic math. He was soon identified as "behind" and failing on his benchmarks. Imagine that, six years old and already so behind. But thankfully he had a savvy and caring teacher who nominate him for Reading Results. Reading Results is a program working in small groups to catch children up on early literacy before it's too late. It was made possible only with extra funding approved in the short term for early literacy by this legislature. What a difference it made. It was transformative.

Theo soon caught up on his reading skills and graduated from the Reading Results program in less than a year. He thrived with the targeted small group attention. But it's been a game-changer for more than his reading, I can see that it's changed how he views himself as a learner. He's confident now, he sees himself as a child who can learn and grow. He's finally back to saying he wants to be a writer.

That is the power of just a small amount of money injected into the school system that this legislature has the power to do. I support HB4125 because it will free up money for Oregon's General Fund, which needs stability. I don't want my child's education to hinge on how accurately economists can read a crystal ball. Thank you.