

Submitter: Crystal Weston
On Behalf Of: Crystal Weston- TTSD Board Member
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4125

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting written testimony as an individual school board member at Tigard Tualatin School District in support of HB 4125.

I get asked sometimes how it is being a school board member, and it's rare these days to respond that things are going well.

I appreciate the historic investments from lawmakers in Salem for education. However, an aging population means historic costs for retirees— costs we have promised to pay. Public servants earn less than their private sector counterparts, and so they rely on benefits like PERS. However, PERS costs use up 20-30% of payroll costs at districts across Oregon. And payroll is more than 80% of total budgets.

HB 4125 is a thoughtful bill that calibrates the kicker formula and then responsibility invests in emergencies such as wildfires, avoiding debt, and PERS. The PERS element would mean breathing room for local government budgets— including schools.

What does that look like? It means fewer situations where rightfully upset families have to advocate for things that we should simply deliver. The tradeoffs we often face include things like:

- Cuts to beloved music programs that bring communities together
- Fewer librarians, which limits access to books
- Larger class sizes. This limits the ability of teachers to connect with each child, and makes classroom management a struggle
- Short school years mean a class may or may not get to geometry because we end a month sooner than other states.
- Finally, consider that by the end of each school year most kids reach grade level. But then after such a long summer the same cohort will have forgotten so much material that only about 30% will show up still on grade level. Even so, our kids and educators show up every fall filled with dedication for this sisyphian effort.

That's why I support HB 4125— because it meaningfully addresses structural funding deficits for local governments and schools.

Sincerely,

Crystal Weston
Tigard Tualatin School District, Board Member