

Submitter: Alicia Infante
On Behalf Of: Hillsboro Classified United Local 4671
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1507

Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Alicia Infante. I am the Political Action Chair for Hillsboro Classified United Local 4671, representing classified school employees in the Hillsboro School District.

Today, I actually struggled to find the right words. Not because this issue is unclear, but because we have said these words before. Last spring, I sat before the Education Committee and pleaded for you to treat education as the priority you say it is. Classified staff, educators, and families asked you to act. You did not hear our plea. Instead, my district alone lost 150 positions across our District. Those losses were not abstract. They were education assistants, behavior supports, mental health staff, student success coordinators. The very people who keep schools functioning and students supported. Those of us still working on the front lines immediately asked ourselves a painful question: How are we supposed to sustain this?

This year, we have our answer. We are seeing and feeling those losses every single day. Class sizes are larger. Mental health supports are thinner or gone all while the mental health needs of students are at an all time high. Behavior supports are stretched beyond reason. Hours are sliced, positions are combined, and expectations continue to grow. And when you slice and dice these supports, the only thing you ultimately reduce is quality, the quality of education our students receive. And let me be clear: this is not the fault of educators or classified staff. We show up every day and do the very best we can with what we are given. But dedication cannot replace staffing, and commitment cannot substitute for resources.

Now, as we look ahead, we are once again staring down more losses. More cuts. More uncertainty. More harm to students. That is devastating and it should be unacceptable.

Oregon's national standing in education is no secret. We all know where we rank. And this did not happen overnight. It is the direct result of years of budget squeezing, of forcing schools to do more with less, and of a continued refusal to tax the wealthy or even close loopholes that do nothing but hurt children in this state.

I cannot fathom why a Democrat-controlled legislature must be begged to prioritize education. But here we are, and frankly, it is embarrassing.

From where we sit, there are only three possible conclusions we can think of: Either #1, Education is not your priority. #2, You do not have any solutions. Or #3, you are beholden to those who benefit from keeping things as they are.

For Hillsboro Classified United, and for our union siblings across Oregon, this is not the job we expect from the leaders we endorse, vote for, and trust to represent us. In a budget where every interest is competing for a share and resources are limited, the question should not be how to divide one piece so everyone gets a bite. The question should be what core priorities we refuse to compromise. The fundamentals that sustain a functioning society: human rights, healthcare, and education. Those are not optional investments; they are the baseline.

Next month, when classified staff and educators are once again faced with another round of “Who stays and Who goes!”, we will be paying close attention. We will remember who chose to truly represent and value public education when it mattered.

Thank you for your time.

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