



## OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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### **House Republicans on Education Subcommittee say no to K-12 budget**

*With no cost containments in sight, the \$8.2 billion dollar budget puts school children at risk*

**Salem, Ore.** — Republican House members of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education today voted "no" on the K-12 education budget being passed with no cost containment measures to ensure the full weight of the budget reaches Oregon's school children.

"Senate Bill 5517 is good in that it increases the K-12 budget by nearly nine percent over the current biennium," said Representative Gene Whisnant (R-Sunriver). "What is not reflected in this budget is that key cost drivers like PERS and health care are slated to go up significantly. That means these additional dollars won't translate into hiring new teachers to reduce class sizes or adding new curriculum opportunities for Oregon's students."

According to the National Education Association's recent nationwide comparison of education budgets between states, Oregon is projected to rank 18th in education funding per student in 2017 and in the top tier 20 for teacher salaries, yet still ranks in the bottom for class size and graduation outcomes.

"As long as we do nothing to address the future of PERS, reduce healthcare costs for employees, and end the practice of 197 school districts individually bargaining with no insight into a state budget that reflects 70% of their local resources, there will never be enough money to make meaningful reforms in our K-12 system," said Representative Julie Parrish (R-Tualatin/West Linn). "While the student population in Oregon has grown by 20,000 students since my first term in 2011, the education budget has grown nearly \$3 billion dollars. Voters and parents should be demand to know why that money isn't reaching children. We need a reset on the systemic cost drivers that are starving resources from our classrooms."

During the hearing, Representative Parrish warned of budget holes on the horizon that could result in SB 5517 failing to meet the reality of school district needs. Her concerns included yet to be determined increases in Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB) healthcare costs and an upcoming July, 2017 PERS board meeting where a change in the assumed PERS rate could drive additional increases in PERS payments by districts. "When these two cost drivers collide with the education budget, we're going to see a massive hole blown in school district budgets across Oregon in the upcoming biennium," she said.

Both representatives also applauded the courage of committee member Representative Diego Hernandez for his desire to be a "no" on the budget as well. His statements triggered a pause in the committee vote when he was temporarily removed from the committee by House Ways and Means Co-Chair Representative Nancy Nathanson.

"Representative Hernandez displayed a rare moment of courage to speak up and do what's right for children. He represented his district well today," stated Representative Parrish.

Notably, SB 5517 moves on to the full Ways and Means Committee without any allocations for voter-approved Measure 98 (CTE education) and Measure 99 (outdoor school). "We're still in the dark about how the Co-Chairs are going to put together the funding to meet the budget goals of the K-12 budget and voter-approved measures," Whisnant said. "It's June 1, and we're still waiting."

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