



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 28, 2021

Timothy G. Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building, H271
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation on HB 2969

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

I am writing to create a record of my hesitation with regard to supporting House Bill 2969. I am in total agreement with the goals of the bill -- to improve oral health education and care for Oregon students -- and I feel that my vote in favor of the measure was correct. However, I urge my colleagues to remember their willingness to support this policy when the time comes to fund the implementation of this policy.

This legislative body has a rich history of passing policies that would improve the lives of Oregonians, but then never providing the funding needed to fully and effectively implement those policies. House Bill 2969 presents another opportunity for such an unfunded mandate: because the oral health education it calls for would not be required in schools until the 2025-26 school year, there is no fiscal impact on the Oregon Department of Education in the current biennium, and the impacts on school districts were not reflected in the fiscal impact statement for the bill.

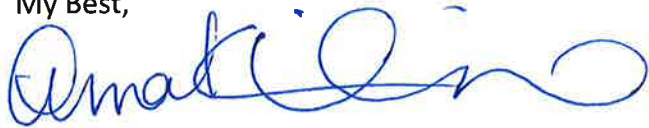
As a long-time advocate for public schools, I have promised my friends and family members who work in public schools that I will push back against unfunded mandates whenever I come across them in my role as a state legislator. In this spirit, I would like to highlight that school districts already face significant standards, performance indicators, and curriculum mandates, and can't simply take on additional educational responsibilities without incurring some cost. When the Oregon legislature hands down policy mandates, we must commit to funding them concurrently, or expect that these policy changes may never be effectively implemented. Delayed implementation dates and a two-year budget cycle allow us to claim political victories while deferring financial challenges, and create an unfunded mandate which most districts



can't fulfill. Not only school districts, but also local governments, and other public providers of important services suffer as a result of this frustrating dynamic.

I am proud to have supported the policy goals in HB 2969, but I call on all legislators -- my colleagues currently in office, my future colleagues who have not yet been elected, and my eventual successor -- to support concurrent funding of these mandates with the same enthusiasm that they supported the policy itself.

My Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anna Williams", with a stylized, flowing script.

Anna Williams

State Representative, House District 52