

JANELLE S. BYNUM
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 51



COMMUNITIES

East Portland
Damascus
Gresham
Boring
Clackamas
Happy Valley

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 31, 2019

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerek,

Please accept this vote explanation for Senate Bill 1049.

As a mother of four school-aged children, I ran for office because I believe every Oregon child deserves a world class education. From early childhood, through our K-12 system, to higher education, our state has fallen behind. The status quo is unacceptable. My vision for Oregon is one where a child's access to opportunity is not limited by zip code.

To achieve this vision, the Legislature needed to act by making significant investments and addressing stressors on the balance sheets of school districts. I voted for HB 3427 (the Student Success Act) earlier in the session as a part of that commitment. This bill assessed a new tax onto businesses like the one my family owns, in order to fund career and technical education, mental health supports, high school graduation success, and the needs of students of color. I was proud to vote yes and personally invest more in Oregon's students. This was a game-changing investment in the success of our children.

In addition to increasing funding, the Legislature also needed to address the rising percentage of budgets that school districts, state agencies and local governments were paying into the Public Employee Retirement System. In the last five years, the cost that public employers have had to pay to cover pension debt obligations has nearly doubled. If nothing is done, costs will rise, on average, to nearly 33% of payroll, and schools around the state will face dire choices, which will inevitably include job cuts. Senate Bill 1049 will increase stability and reduce the system-wide increases in employer rates in an equitable, comprehensive, and legal way. My kids have lived through the furlough days, teacher layoffs and classrooms of 30+ kids back in 2007. My commitment to my community is to do everything I can to ensure this never, ever happens again.

My parents taught in public schools for over 30 years, so I know the direct impact furloughs, uncompetitive salaries, and difficult working environments can have in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. It is my expectation that working Oregon out of this crisis will put us on a better track to pay more and offer our teachers, and other public employees, the type of careers they can continue to be proud of.

Sincerely,


Rep. Janelle Bynum

