

**RICK LEWIS**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 18  
OREGON'S CHRISTMAS TREE DISTRICT



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

June 17, 2025

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

Re: Vote explanation on SB 5516-A

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak;

I voted yes on this bill out of a Constitutional duty to fund public education. I have grave concerns about the significant increase in funding for our schools in light of the recent actions taken by the Legislative body. Last week, the Legislature passed a bill that sends even more money out of the classroom and to union teachers for the time they spend on strike. We aren't improving education and we aren't getting the money to the classroom and to the students. Instead, we are paying teachers not to work, reducing classroom hours even more.

There is no equity in the way the Department of Education allocates funding to school districts. The same per student funding formula applies to large districts with better budgets as for small districts with more of a need.

There is no question that districts need more funding, but we need to fix education sooner rather than later. Money alone is not going to fix the problems we have with public education or the quality of education in this state. Will the money go to the classroom? Probably not. Funding is a bottomless pit and we keep throwing money at the problem hoping something will change.

I was a very reluctant yes vote on this bill. In the next biennium, I will expect to see data on how much of the funding from this budget actually reaches the classroom and data on improvements to the quality of education. I also support more funding for alternative forms of education and the need for Oregon to explore options that lead to improvements. This can't wait any longer.

Rick Lewis  
State Representative, HD 18