

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

April 26, 2021

TO: Lori Brocker, Secretary of the Oregon State Senate

CC: James Goulding, Publications Coordinator

RE: Vote Explanation for SB 580

Chief Clerk Brocker,

I voted "Yes" on SB 580 and wish to explain my vote.

This bill is a straightforward and uncomplicated one. It simply allows class sizes to be discussed as a part of contract negotiations between teachers and school boards. It does not mandate class sizes and leaves these decisions in the hands of each local school district across the State.

According to a report by the Oregon Department of Education in 2019, Oregon averages about 26 students per class in elementary schools and 28 students per class in high schools, among the largest class sizes in the nation. The national average for elementary school is 21 students, and 24 in high school. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only Utah has larger class sizes than Oregon does.

Smaller class sizes positively impact the quality of a student's learning and increases the amount of individualized attention that each student receives, impacting educational achievement. Connecticut, a state similar in population to Oregon, has an average of 19 students in elementary school classrooms and 22 in high school classes. It should come as no surprise that Connecticut's four-year high school graduation rate is nearly 90%, significantly higher than Oregon's, which is currently at 83%.

I realize that there are many competing demands for every dollar received by school districts. But there are no more important stakeholders in our schools – and in Oregon's future - than our schoolchildren and their teachers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

State Senator Deb Patterson
District 10