

WSPTA Testimony on SSB 5313 on Enrichment Levies February 25, 2019 1:30 p.m., Sen Ways & Means, JACB SHR 4

Good afternoon, Chair Rolfes and members of the committee. I am Lisa Keating, speaking today on behalf of Washington State PTA in support of Senate Bill 5313. I live in the 28th Legislative District and the Tacoma school district.

While we appreciate all the increases in funding for basic education the past few years, the policy changes in 2017 also decreased local levy authority drastically, which has limited school districts' ability to fund enrichment programs their communities support.

For example, in the Tacoma Public Schools, the levy shortfall will impact an anti-bullying program I have in two schools, one of which I have partnered with for six years. The capacity and momentum that has been created has come to a halt, impacting about 1,000 students. The culture and climate of a school determines the safety of each student. When a student does not feel safe, learning cannot happen. Safe, inclusive learning environments are the baseline for any student's ability to thrive.

Additional programs threatened are the Extended Day at Foss High School and the family support specialist for homeless students at Lincoln High School. Both programs are helping Tacoma Public Schools improve student success but are outside of basic education. These are just a few programs that will suffer if levy authority is not restored.

Tacoma voters, and voters in similar districts, have been generous, supporting programs and staff beyond what the state's funding formula dictates. Please restore the ability for communities to support enrichment programs that the community sees as essential to their district. And Please support SB 5313 Thank you.