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**It's time to keep Washington's promise**  
**Statement from Megan Larkin, Washington State PTA Advocacy Director**

Washington State PTA's 80,000 parents, students, educators, and community members are united by the belief that all children deserve a high-quality public education. Fully funding K-12 is a key step towards making every child's potential a reality.

The Washington State Constitution says it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for education. Not a suggestion. A promise.

But that promise is broken.

In my district and many others, we are experiencing ever growing class sizes. Key personnel like nurses are absent, leaving dangerous gaps when inevitable emergencies arise. More behavior problems are emerging due to the loss of paraeducators in the general education classroom. We're seeing longer evaluation times for decisions on qualifying for special education services and IEP service hours not being met due to staff shortages.

Our enrichment levies - which should go towards things like extracurricular activities, art, music, and athletics - instead fund special education staff, multilingual services, security specialists, and transportation. These aren't enrichment. These are basics.

This creates massive inequities. Property wealthy districts raise more levy funds. Property poor districts cannot. Many districts can't pass enrichment levies at all.

Families like mine - facing tripled healthcare costs and skyrocketing grocery bills - stretch budgets to pay hundreds in fees for basic services and hundreds more for the enrichment our levy was supposed to cover. An increasing number of families and districts simply cannot afford it.

Kids see this and think we don't believe they're worth the investment.

More revenue must be dedicated to our schools - but not on the backs of struggling families. We must lift up children and families with the meaningful wrap around support services they sorely need.

Our schools are community hubs, places families trust. The heart of our neighborhoods that are more essential than ever in these troubling times. For children facing food insecurity or housing instability, school may be the only place they're fed, safe, and cared for.

The Legislature must fund materials, supplies, and operating costs at actual costs; they fell short by more than \$340 million in the 2024-25 school year. We must do better so that schools can keep the lights on and cover the heating and cooling in their buildings. Teachers should not be forced to buy school supplies, and PTAs shouldn't need to fundraise for textbooks, paper, and pens.

The state must pay for transportation at what it actually costs so every child can get to school safely.

We must close the special education funding gap - still short even after last session's investments - so students with disabilities get the services they are legally entitled to without raiding enrichment levies.

Let enrichment levies be for their intended purpose – enrichment.

That's our constitutional duty. We must fulfill it.