

Testimony of

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Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of the caps on class sizes proposed in Senate Bill 1093, which would take an important step in ensuring that classrooms are places where students can learn, and educators can teach.

I have been in teacher for the last 8 years, and have seen my class sizes steadily increase every year. When I first started, 25 students in a class was unthinkable to me, 20 students was excessive, and the perfect number of students for optimal academic and social emotion achievement hovering around 18. As the years have progressed, however, I now breathe a sigh of relief when I see that a class has under 27 students. To be clear, the relief is in the fact that I won't have to find more desks or books for my students; it is not in the fact that I think I will be a better teacher for them. The reason that I say the sweet spot for class enrollment numbers is around 18 is not based in nothing. From experience, class sizes under 20 but above 15 allow for best learning practices to take place on multiple educational fronts. First, we have the academic needs to students, which are all being met because if I teach 5 classes, all with 18-20 students, the most I am going to have 100 kids. That means 100 papers to grade, to give in-depth feedback to in a timely manner, 100 potentially different strategies that I might have to use to reach those students that I have. It also means that I have 100 kids that I am being going to be able to reach, to get to know and understand to the point where I can not only spot their academic pitfalls, but their emotional ones as well. That all feels like a big undertaking when it's written down like that. But now I'd like to reimagine what I just wrote to reflect that accurate numbers in today's classrooms. Most of my classes have 25-30 students (It trends higher than 25 in most), which means that on the low side, I will have 125 students whose needs all must be met by state standards. If we look on the high side, that would be 150. Oh but wait! I forgot to mention, that since we live in the world we do, and apparently do not have the money to higher or even just retain teachers, I have taken on an additional class responsibility

this year, which I will likely have to do next year as well. So whatever our highest number is (150), lets tack on another 30 to that. That means that in the current school climate that we are in, in the absolute best circumstances possible, I would have 150 students spread across 6 classes. Worst case scenario is 180. That is almost 100 more than the dream scenario that I was working in 8 years ago. Honestly, when I had 18 kids in class when I first started teaching, I thought that was too much. 88 minutes (because: block teaching) to give genuine time to each individual kid seemed like a stretch. Now? That seems like a dream scenario that I would go back to in a heartbeat. Hindsight is always 20/20, right?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

