

Remarks by Tammy Wawro, President of the Iowa State Education Association

Public Hearing on House File 80

January 26, 2015

Good evening. My name is Tammy Wawro, and I am the President of the Iowa State Education Association. We represent more than 34,000 education professionals in Iowa and I stand before you tonight not to stream facts and figures about why you should set a 6 percent growth rate for Iowa's students.

I am afraid you already know that Iowa only ranks 35th in the nation on per pupil spending and that places our students \$1,642 below the national average and that the Governor's proposal of 1.25 percent is woefully inadequate.

My bigger fear this evening is that too many of you are indifferent.

I am afraid that some of you are so uninterested in supporting Iowa's next generation that you are willing to watch as they try to do their best in a funding system that is giving them the least.

I am a fifth grade teacher by profession. I have been in the classroom for more than 20 years and have seen my share of scenarios. We have all been fifth graders, so understanding where my young students are coming from, what their needs and insecurities are, and what makes them light up and learn, is easy if we remember.

I know when my 11-year-olds come in ready to learn, or when one is hungry and needs a snack from my bottom drawer. I know which come from families who cannot give them the support they need to easily succeed, and I know how much individual attention it takes to move them along in their own time and in their own ways. I know you like to pretend that our student

to teacher ratio in Iowa doesn't matter. But, you will hear tonight from many who are actually in the classrooms. It does matter. Because of the years of inadequate state support, we have larger and larger class sizes translating into thousands of students who no longer receive the individualized instruction they deserve because it is physically impossible to do.

You will hear from others in the classroom about outdated curriculum and textbooks --- many more than a decade old. You will hear about how our educators reach into their own pockets to make up their supply budgets because some of you folks have failed to find this important. We all want Iowa's students to meet the demands of the 21st century, and be college-or-career ready. But I ask you how we are to help our students do all of this without the proper supports? College ready? We're trying our hardest with old books, outdated technology and cobbled together supplies.

The good news is there are still awesome things happening in our schools in spite of this. I dream that those great achievements will be multiplied when you policymakers find the will to make the right decisions and fund our children's futures. Give them the chances they so desperately deserve. Thank you.