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I've been involved with this school district for 41 years in various roles. This is not the first school budget that I've been concerned about, but this one has a possible reduction that scares me because it seems unsafe. I am referring to the loss of the final 3 Kindergarten paraprofessionals.

We are talking about a classroom comprised of 18-22 children. Some of these children have just turned 5 years old, some haven't been in a school setting before and are just learning how to do simple things such as lining up and walking in a hall, never mind navigating the building. Most, if not all, are learning how to be a listener and follow the directions of an adult.

For the adult leading them to recess, lunch, a special on the 2nd or 3rd floor, this becomes a challenge because there's no way to always keep your eye on all children as you need to take corners. When children can't be seen, they can get distracted by several things and there's a lot that could go wrong.

These are the same kids we need to count on in an emergency. Whether it is a fire drill (when everyone is exiting the building simultaneously) or a secure (when everyone must leave their favorite playground equipment quickly to get inside) or a lockdown or evacuation. Two adults are needed to get the group together, keep the group together and scoop up the kids who aren't following

directions. The weight of this responsibility on the shoulders of classroom teachers is very heavy and seems to be getting heavier each year.

From a historical perspective, this district used to have full time regular education paraprofessionals in each Kindergarten and each First-Grade classroom while our class sizes were also smaller. Most of these positions were funded through Title 1 and when the district moved to a full day model it was with the understanding that there wouldn't be any changes to the amount of paraprofessionals available to support each class. Paraprofessionals were able to support students in ALL subject areas as well as assisting with their day-to-day social-emotional learning, which is a big part of a Kindergarten day.

This district's responsibility is to keep kids safe while also providing excellent instruction. Reducing this last group of staff for our youngest learners will not help us meet the goal of a safe environment.

Please consider all aspects of these reductions before making your recommendations.

Dear Committee, (jessice judson)

It is extremely important that we keep paraprofessionals in kindergarten classrooms next year. It is incredibly difficult—almost impossible—for one teacher to provide individual attention to 18 or more children on their own.

Walking through the halls is a major safety concern. Five- and six-year-olds are easily distracted and may leave the line or stop the entire line because something catches their attention. When a teacher leads the line and a paraprofessional brings up the rear, it helps ensure that no one is lost or left behind.

One teacher simply cannot provide the level of attention, safety, and education that 18 or more five-year-olds require without support. Some students need extra assistance just to sit and participate during rug time, and without additional help, those students may not receive the support they need because the teacher must focus on leading the entire class.

I would also like to add that having two gym teachers has been extremely beneficial and has improved the day-to-day activity level for the children. It allows students to participate in more than one activity during gym class and gives them opportunities for more individualized attention.

Please also keep in mind that the teachers who may be cut are outstanding educators who genuinely love their jobs and care deeply about this community. With three large, family-focused housing developments currently

being built, student enrollment will likely increase. We will need these dedicated educators to support our growing school community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hello everyone, my name is Aiden Neale and I live at 4 Ashley Drive. I am terribly sorry I cannot be there this evening, believe me I tried, but I am in college and couldn't return home. **But I still have things to say.** I write to you not only as a proud graduate of Amesbury High School's Class of 2025, nor simply as a political science major interested in local government, but most importantly as a concerned resident of Amesbury.

When I first heard about the proposal to cut a history position at the high school, I was deeply saddened, I may even go far enough as to say I was appalled. Not only because it meant yet another devastating cut to a school system I was proud to be part of, but because I know the character of the two individuals whose positions are at risk. Mr. Osgood and Mr. Miller are two of the finest educators in that building. They build meaningful relationships with students in ways that many cannot replicate. They keep students engaged, even when the subject matter may not initially spark interest, and they create classroom environments that are welcoming to all.

I would not be where I am today without these two extraordinary individuals. My Freshman year, I had the privilege of meeting both Mr. Osgood as my WIN advisor and

Mr. Miller as my Geography teacher. Both helped to spark my interest in the political field, engaging in thoughtful and educational conversations with me.

I spent the most time with Mr. Osgood, who served as my WIN advisor for all four years of high school. I also had the privilege of working closely with him as President of the Social Studies Honor Society during my senior year. In those four years, there was **never** a day when I saw him turn a student away. His door was always open and he treated every student with the care they needed.

I understand that these decisions are not based on your personal opinions of the individuals involved, so I shall shift to address the broader issue. The idea of cutting a history position is preposterous. As a political science major at Saint Anselm College, I often hear the same comment when I tell people what I study: “You certainly chose an interesting time to enter that field.” As if I had a choice.

My point is: at a time like this, reducing access to historical education is the **wrong** decision. History provides students with the context necessary to understand the world around them. Without a strong foundation in history, how can we expect young people to become informed, thoughtful members of society? How can they make sense of their government, their rights, or the global challenges they face without understanding the historical parallels that shape our present?

Cutting a history position does not just reduce staffing. It diminishes our students’ ability to understand the world they are inheriting. And that is a loss our community cannot afford. Thank you.

Good evening. My name is Addison Kelly, and I am a senior here at Amesbury High School.

I want to begin by acknowledging how difficult the position you are in is, especially considering that this has become an annual occurrence. Despite the many stressors you may be facing, I hope you will truly hear what I have to say and take it into thoughtful consideration.

I am here tonight to speak on behalf of the History Department and to advocate for both Mr. Osgood and Mr. Miller.

I have never particularly enjoyed school, and I imagine many people in this room can relate. However, regardless of any negative experiences I've had at Amesbury, I will never forget the joy I felt being in Mr. Miller's and Mr. Osgood's classrooms. I think we all have that one class during the day we look forward to - maybe because it's the only time we truly understand the material, or simply because we feel seen. For me, both of these classes provided that sense of security.

I was not the most motivated student during my freshman year, and honestly, I don't remember much from it. What I do remember is almost everything I learned in Mr. Miller's class. In fact, when someone mentions the printing press, I still get excited to recite my DBQ from freshman-year World History. Not only did I retain what I learned in Mr. Miller's classroom, but I was genuinely excited to learn and to share that knowledge with others. Neither Mr. Miller nor Mr. Osgood ever let words of encouragement go unsaid which is an incredibly powerful quality given the stage of psychological development all highschoolers are in.

To be completely honest, there are very few classes where I truly feel like I'm learning. Most are focused on quick memorization just to pass a test, and if I'm lucky, I'll remember a detail or two when asked at a later date. If you ask me, the purpose of school should be to teach students -not to have them memorize information and move on. To protect the true intention of education, it is critical that a history position is not cut.

It wasn't just Mr. Miller who made me excited to learn. I had Mr. Osgood my sophomore year, and while I was more attentive by then, the excitement of walking into a history

classroom never went away. Mr. Osgood has a unique ability to connect with students in a way that motivates them to learn, something I've found to be incredibly rare. I distinctly remember my U.S. History class because no matter how anyone was feeling, Mr Osgood always began class with a smile.

When I learned that these positions were on the chopping block, I immediately opened my Notes app and began writing this speech. For a student like me -someone who finds very little joy in school -Mr. Miller's and Mr. Osgood's classes gave me something to look forward to every single day. I am not just asking you to save these classes, but to save these teachers, because the impact of these classes would not exist without them.

Given everything happening in the world around us today, regardless of political beliefs, cutting a history class would be one of the most detrimental decisions made in these budget cuts to date. Every student at Amesbury High will eventually go out into the world and contribute to society. We are the future - but how can we prevent the most devastating parts of our past from repeating if we are not properly educated about them?

History must be taught to its fullest extent. When you have multiple classes led by teachers who form meaningful connections with students and teach material that goes far beyond memorization, you cannot eliminate those classes and those teachers without sending a message that student learning is not a priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.