Subject: SB 819 and SB 820

Chair Roblan & Committee,

Tomorrow SB 819 and SB 820 will be before the Senate Committee on Education and I emphatically urge you to pass these two critical measures. Public charter schools are a vital source of energy and experimentation in public education. While traditional public school environments may adequately educate most students in a cost effective manner, there are children, like mine, for whom this system does not work

My daughter transferred to Southwest Charter School (SWCS) in Portland's South Waterfront neighborhood 3 years ago when she started 1st grade. My daughter was recently diagnosed with ADHD and she struggles with executive function. I feel confident that her learning and emotional needs are better addressed because of the unique learning environment offered at SWCS. The small class sizes, access to teachers and administrators and place based learning focus have allowed her to thrive in ways I don't believe would be possible in a traditional public school environment. Being able to learn in a hands-on way, spending time beyond classroom walls, in the community in which she lives and loves has been of great benefit to her.

Unfortunately our school, like many other charter schools, must make all this happen with 42% less funding than district schools get. The Chalkboard Project just did a thorough study of this and the results are discouraging. As a SWCS parent and volunteer, I know how difficult it is to achieve the results we have, and are being held to, with such a drastic reduction in funding compared to our district counterparts.

Our teachers and children deserve the same funding and opportunities that are provided to all district teachers and children, even if that means migrating to an alternative charter environment that allows them to thrive. I ask that you please pass SB 819 and SB 820 tomorrow.

I very much appreciate your careful consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,

Erica Bailey

Southwest Charter School Parent & Volunteer

Portland, OR