

February 15, 2022

Re: Testimony for Senate Bill 1552

As a parent with a child with disabilities, I am fully in support this bill. My son was relentlessly bullied in Brick and Mortar schools. The school environment was not conducive to his style of learning. Because of his disabilities, he was not able to function in the classroom setting. The environment itself with all of its facial expressions and noises and distractions and lights and bells and voices and posters, etc. was too much for him. The schools had no way of creating an environment in which he could function and learn.

For a few years we homeschooled and had no support at all, no checks on his progress, no direction on curriculum, no social skills therapy or executive function therapy. When we found out about openings in a Virtual Charter School, we jumped at the chance to enroll. My son now has an incredible education facilitator who monitors his progress, supports him and advocates for him. My son has virtual therapy sessions, online classes tailored to him and he is thriving! He has 5 As and a B, but most importantly, he is learning everyday and much happier.

If we moved, as we've considered over the last few years, and the new school district already reached their 3% cap and wouldn't allow him to continue in his virtual school, my son would just have to be homeschooled again, losing out on the opportunities he has. He would lose out on his disability services and the invaluable support and guidance he gets through our school. He would be stuck with me as his teacher which would severely limit his ability to have a well-rounded education. My son deserves to have an equitable education. He is a wonderful, brilliant, kind-hearted kid who is an incredible artist. He deserves to have the community of educators and students that our school provides. The virtual charter school is the only way for him to get that.

Sarah C