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On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1552

Hello

I am writing to support SB 1552. I have worked at two of the largest virtual schools in the state as an administrator. Rather than focus on systems reasons why the Senate should or shouldn't support removing the 3% cap I would like to give you a case study to illustrate what can happen.

In my time as a director we were proud to support multiple transgender students, several of whom were transitioning when they came to us. Their brick and mortar experiences were too difficult and they wanted a school that would follow the state guidance on name and pronoun use. They also wanted a supportive staff and a way to protect themselves from harassment on a campus. I remember one student who this was an accurate description of. They applied and explained why they were choosing a virtual option. However, a few days later this student was denied enrollment. The district was over their cap and would not allow them to attend. What happened after that was a hardship for the student. One that students from other districts did not face either because their cap was not met, or they choose not to enforce it. This is the reason that the cap is seen as discriminatory.

The student described that in their home district they were not even allowed to change their name. It was evident that this child feared attending and did not believe that their school leadership would defend them. All children deserve a school where they feel safe. Denying this option to some while allowing it for others is counter to the Oregon Equity Framework we strive to develop in our districts. Thank you for your time.