

Submitter: Carolyn Suliman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1552

Thank you so much to all members of the Senate Education Committee for hearing my testimony in support of SB1552 today.

My name is Carolyn Suliman and my family lives in Corvallis, Oregon. My son is a first grader at WillCA, Willamette Connections Academy. My daughter will begin kindergarten in 2023. This virtual school allows our family the flexibility we need to attend the many medical appointments required without any disruption to education. My son is able to pursue his interests of science, engineering, and soccer. His love of learning is supported by his teacher, and also by us as a family, and he is excelling both academically and creatively. We are thrilled to watch him learn and grow, and we want the same for our daughter when she is of age to attend primary school.

A great deal has changed in the state since 2011, when the Oregon State Legislature placed a cap of 3% on the number of students in a school district who can transfer to virtual charter schools. While that decision made sense at the time, student populations have changed greatly since then. Covid has upended things in many ways. Technology has improved, allowing for more and better virtual options for students than ever before. Much has changed for Oregonian families in the past decade, and the 3% cap should be lifted to support that change.

With many districts already hitting the 3% cap for virtual enrollment, my family has a great deal of uncertainty about the future enrollment of our daughter. We would be devastated if we would not be able to make our own decision about which school our daughter can attend. We hope to have the freedom to make that choice as a family, rather than risk having our hands tied when the time comes to enroll her. As parents, we want to see our daughter excel and learn and thrive in an environment best suited to her learning needs, rather than stifled because of an enrollment cap.

I ask that you support this bill and lift the enrollment cap to ensure that all families in Oregon have the academic freedom of choice they deserve. Our students deserve that freedom.

Thank you,
Carolyn Suliman