

Submitter: Sherry Bowers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1552

I am writing in support of the bill SB 1552 to remove the 3% Enrollment Cap. I am the mother and Learning Coach of four special needs children (one daughter and three sons) who have been with Oregon Virtual Academy (ORVA) since 2010. My daughter graduated from ORVA in 2019. She was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in March 2010.

The ability to enroll her into ORVA was very beneficial as she was learning about living with a life-threatening condition. Being able to reduce the amount of added stress of a Brick-and-mortar environment caused by the transportation and hours away from consistent care enabled her to focus on her education and manage her diabetes in a safe and comforting environment.

The educators at ORVA were highly trained to help her with her learning delays by recognizing the need to place her on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). They were very compassionate and patient with her, encouraging her every step of the way through her online journey.

Her brothers are well on their way to following in her footsteps. They each have medical issues that require additional learning supports. ORVA has placed two of my sons in high school on IEP's, providing support for them in the forms of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) classes, and a modified graduation plan. My youngest son is currently on a 504 and in the process for an IEP. He also has Type 1 Diabetes, diagnosed in February 2009.

The 504 has allowed him the freedom to ask for extra support in his education and excused him from classes when his blood sugars have interfered with the ability to attend classes or complete coursework deadlines.

And finally, being a part of the ORVA family has benefitted our entire family, enabling my disabled husband to be a part of his kids' education, and the ORVA staff being sensitive and compassionate about our family's situation. Many of them have advocated for us to get the greatest support possible.

I honestly do not think we would get such depth of support for all the kids all at the same time in a Brick-and-Mortar environment and I strongly encourage considering removing the enrollment cap to ensure that every Oregon family benefits from the freedom to choose the best education for their children.