

Submitter: Richard Sheperd
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB3014

Dear Chair Neron, Members of the Committee,

I want to express my full support for HB 3014, to obtain flexibility of funding for school transportation across our state.

Too many of our young people today are growing up without learning the basic skills of navigating their neighborhood by their own two feet. We have effectively imprisoned our children in wooden boxes, fenced in yards and playgrounds, only to be transported by metal boxes to and from their school or other activities. This has led to students being unable to even to even walk to see friends in their own neighborhood, let alone walk or bike to school on their own.

Programs like the Bike Bus and Walking School busses give children the opportunity to learn how to navigate their environment. Life skills are taught in how to safely cross the street, follow directions, and build relationships with neighbors and friends will improve their resiliency and self-confidence.

While parents and teachers have been willing to commit significant time on their own to these programs, this is only possible in wealthier communities that have parents with free time. Flexibility of transportation funding will ensure these programs become more widely accessible to school districts across the state. While we all agree that school busses are a necessary part of school transportation, and districts and school principals deserve the choice in putting some of those school transportation funds into other alternatives.

Please pass HB 3014. Oregon's children deserve to learn how to walk, bike, and stand on their own two feet.

Sincerely,
Richard "RJ" Sheperd