Submitter:	Noelle Studer-Spevak
On Behalf Of:	
Committee:	House Committee On Education
Measure:	HB2895

Chair Neron and Members of the Committee,

Please lift the cap on special education funding to districts by approving HB 2895.
The cap has seriously impacted our family in multiple ways:
1. Districts ration testing to avoid providing special ed services. This happens explicitly by dissuading testing, and functionally by 1)limiting staff able to do testing so that there are extremely long wait times - during which, the student falls farther and farther behind classmates, and 2) providing testing that is not comprehensive.
2. Most health insurance does not cover testing, so anyone not on OHP is likely paying exorbitant sums out-of-pocket for an accurate diagnosis.
3. The cap creates an incentive to boot children off IEPs prematurely who really should have them.
4. Special education access is uneven. Some schools do not have resources to serve neurodiverse children, so privileged families move to find resources, and low-income kids go without services. For example: in our neighborhood school, the total number of hours required in student IEPs far exceeded the available staff hrs/wk. One principal said, "We just don't have capacity to help kids like yours."
5. Programs that serve neurodiverse kids are in short supply and out of reach. Edison: $26K/yr. Park Academy: $24K/yr

When our child was in first grade, I thought there might be a problem and I asked an in-school therapist what to do. She said, "Between you and me, go outside of PPS because you'll have to wait forever for testing." Initial testing found ADHD and generalized anxiety disorder, they received a 504. Then, in 2017 additional testing found substantial reading/eye problems, so I requested an IEP. The SpEd person from the district put strong pressure on me to waive our right to testing. She said, "You don't want a permanent disability label on your child, do you? So many other children need help." We started occupational therapy, vision therapy, finished out the year and switched schools.
The next school did not have testing capacity so we paid $2500 for a neuro-psych evaluation and got an IEP. That school promised services, but never got the necessary speech-to-text device so our child could read/write, so we switched to another school district.
We paid $50/hr for group tutoring that made no difference and then found a really good dyslexia tutor who used the science of reading, and our daughter finally started to read in 6th grade. In 7th grade, MESD tested and the district recommended removing her IEP and go back to a 504. Since she was reading, we agreed things were much better, but were worried because she couldn't remember a single math

fact. Before 8th grade we finally paid $4000+ out-of-pocket for a full battery of educational/psych testing to understand how to prepare for high school. Our child's full diagnosis: 1-autism, 2-generalized anxiety disorder, 3-ADHD inattentive type, 4-dyscalculia, 5-dysgraphia, 6-auditory processing disorder, and one silver lining: excellent visual processing. Knowing our child's one strength, we are going all-in on graphic design CTE for high school.

We are outliers, with incredible privilege: I speak English, hold advanced degrees, know my child's rights, have done research to find qualified therapists and tutors, paid thousands per year for specialists, have a car and time to drive our child all over the metro Portland area for weekly appointments, and made sure daily eye/brain exercises happened. 95% of neurodiverse children in our state are not actually having their educational needs met with appropriate services - a gross violation of federal law. One teacher who formerly worked in New York told me that the condition of special education in Oregon is shocking, "There simply have not been enough law suits to force action."

Please vote yes on HB 2895; it's time for districts to remove this cap/blindfold, look clearly into the eyes of the children in their care and say, "Don't worry, we've got your back."