

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10, which includes South Salem, West Salem, Monmouth, and Independence. I would like to testify in support of HB 2669, which would declare that children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind have the same rights and potential as children who are not. Additionally, school districts would be required to provide DHH children with screenings and assessments, support, and access to relevant resources and programs.

Oregon's resources for DHH children are simply not sufficient to meet their needs. Deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind children are often not given the support they require to succeed in Oregon's public schools. Meanwhile, Oregon only has one school for the deaf, severely limiting DHH children's alternatives to public school. DHH children's access to mental health providers fluent in their primary mode of communication, including ASL, is limited as well.

HB 2669 would combat these systemic issues by requiring school districts to offer DHH children resources intended to secure them the equal educational access they deserve. These resources include communication and educational plans, individual-specific placement, full communication access to all educational programs, and communication access to mental health providers.

HB 2669 recognizes that DHH children have the same potential as the rest of their peers, but are often faced with significant barriers to succeeding, simply because they must navigate a school system that was not designed to meet their needs. This legislation would be a giant step forward in leveling the playing field.

I urge your aye vote.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deb Patterson".

Deb Patterson