

Submitter: Jayme Sloan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce
Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3053

Dear Members of House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce
Development:

My name is Jayme Sloan and I am writing in full support of HB 3053, which provides funding to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for a pilot program at the University of Oregon. This initiative will train graduate-level speech-language pathology students to use a family-centered approach when serving children with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) needs in a traditional overnight summer camp setting.

The possibility of this program is so exciting to me, both professionally and personally. As a clinical associate professor in the Communication Disorders and Sciences Program at the University of Oregon, I know how valuable hands on, immersive experiences are for our student clinicians. This program will provide graduate student clinicians with invaluable experience, equipping them with the specialized skills necessary to support AAC users and their families effectively. While our department has had extremely successful and engaging day camps over the past few years, it is clear that the AAC community is yearning for more.

Beyond my professional role, I am also the parent of a three-year-old AAC user. I know firsthand how essential it is for children who rely on AAC to have opportunities to develop their communication skills in a supportive, interactive environment. This program will not only benefit the children, but it will also empower families by fostering collaboration and confidence in using AAC at home and in the community. It can be very isolating having a child that uses AAC and this camp would provide a sense of normal for these families that feel like outliers. I imagine that this program would be a highlight of the families' years given it's deep, meaningful, and impactful nature.

Currently, there is nothing like this in Oregon. This pilot program presents a unique and much-needed opportunity for graduate students, children, and families alike. If funded and successfully implemented, it could serve as a model for other states to follow, positioning Oregon as a trailblazer in innovative AAC education and support.

I urge you to support the passage of HB 3053 and help make this groundbreaking program a reality. Thank you for your time and consideration.