

Submitter: Samantha Shune

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce
Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3053

Dear Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce
Development,

I am writing to share my enthusiastic support for HB 3053, which would provide necessary funding to support the innovative University of Oregon pilot program to train speech-language pathology graduate students to better serve children with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) needs in a traditional overnight summer camp setting. This program would be the first of its kind nationally to address both workforce development within the higher education setting (clinical training of graduate students) with direct service provision for children who are AAC users and their families. Such an overnight camp experience as proposed in this bill would put Oregon on the map as a model for innovation and leadership!

As a speech-language pathologist, faculty member at the University of Oregon, and former director of the Communication Disorders and Sciences Program, I can attest to the immense value of this program. First, as an educator, the ability to provide such intensive, hands-on training to our graduate students will have an exponential impact on the services being provided in our local communities. There is a dearth of clinicians trained to work with individuals with AAC and their families, particularly in harder to reach communities and vulnerable populations as are prevalent in the state. The opportunity to train ~20 future clinicians is a high value activity. Second, as a clinician, the ability to provide children who are AAC users with a typical overnight camp experience, an experience that they so frequently are excluded from, an experience that is instrumental for developing social skills and a sense of independence, and an experience that is, frankly, fun, is an amazing opportunity.

I strongly encourage you to support HB 3053 as it no doubt will have a high impact on the State of Oregon through such specialized workforce training in the higher education setting!

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University of Oregon