

Submitter: Shelley Watson

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:

I am writing in full support of HB 3053 which would provide funding to the University of Oregon for a pilot program training graduate students who will ultimately be serving children with augmentative and alternative communication needs in a traditional overnight summer camp setting. As a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and a supervisor in this camp since 2018, I have witnessed the impact that this camp has had on our AAC users and their families first hand. For many of our campers, this is the only opportunity they have ever had to attend a traditional summer camp. Camper's families speak about being able to send their other children to Boyscout/Girlscout camps, or camps through the YMCA, while their AAC user stays at home, due to these camps lacking supports for children with unique communication needs. Our campers have opportunities to participate in traditional summer camp activities, such as going swimming, horseback riding, attending a movie in a theater, and taking part in a play or talent show in a supportive environment surrounded by their family and peers. Caregivers have the opportunity to connect with each other during this unique experience, and can share information with each other about supporting AAC in the home. In addition, our graduate student obtain valuable leadership and clinical skills that are easily transferable to the workforce upon graduation. We have scholarship and practical expertise in this area and with funding could leverage our resources to fully train our students. By funding training of future practitioners, the impact is exponential as each of those students will go on to serve this population. I urge you to vote in support of HB 3053.

Shelley Watson, MA SLP-L