

Submitter: Lily Cook  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

Testimony in Support of HB 2953

Oregon House Education Committee

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

I am the mother of a very bright 11-year-old child with autism who receives special education services here in Oregon. I strongly urge you to support HB 2953 because it provides much-needed funding for special education—funding that directly impacts children and families like mine.

Like many parents of children with disabilities, I have seen firsthand how critical special education services are. My child is bright, curious, and full of potential, but he also faces challenges that require individualized support. With the help of a dedicated special education teacher, speech and occupational therapists, and a full-time paraeducator, he has made incredible progress.

But I also know what happens when resources are stretched too thin. My son has been in classrooms where the teacher didn't have enough support, where staff turnover meant constant changes, and where the lack of funding meant he did not get the services promised in his IEP. The reality is, special education in Oregon is underfunded, and it shows. Schools are being asked to do more with less, and it's our children who suffer the consequences.

HB 2953 is a step toward fixing this. This bill would increase funding for special education services, ensuring that children like mine have access to the support they need—not just on paper, but in reality. This is not only about compliance with the law; it's about giving every child a real chance to succeed.

Investing in special education doesn't only help students with disabilities—it strengthens our entire education system and our entire community. When students receive the right support, they can participate more fully in their classrooms, reducing disruptions and improving outcomes for everyone. Teachers can focus on teaching instead of being stretched beyond their limits. And most importantly, children with disabilities can grow into adults who contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

I urge you to pass HB 2953 and show families like mine that our state values inclusion, opportunity, and the future of all its children.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to this issue.