

Submitter: Douglas S Parker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2448

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Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs McIntire, Dobson, and members of the committee.

Hello, my name is Doug Parker. I live in Wilsonville and my grandchildren attend school in the West Linn/Wilsonville and Portland School Districts. I write in support of HB 2448.

I grew up in a time when our special needs and disabled family members were segregated from our schools and in far too many instances, shuttered in institutions. Luckily, that all changed 50 years ago. As you may know, when it passed Public Law 94-142 in 1975, Congress recognized the critical importance to families and to society of mainstreaming special needs children in public schools.

The Oregon Legislature responded that same year by establishing a Special Education Task Force that included Representative Mary Rieke (R-Portland), Senator Cliff Trow (D-Corvallis), and representatives from the Oregon Department of Education, Mental Health Division and Children's Services Division. That task force surveyed services delivery in Oregon for special needs children and their families and recommended a legislative package that was adopted by the 1977 Legislature. Oregon thus embraced the monumental legislation that has been a life changer for millions of our disabled or special needs citizens throughout America, for their families, and for the many more millions of Americans who have been enriched by being a part of an inclusive educational experience .

Mainstreaming or inclusion must, of necessity, come with a price. Congress, and the 1977 Legislature, understood that and intended that there would be sufficient funding to allow special needs and disabled children to be educated in regular classrooms with sufficient support. That commitment has been ratified in subsequent years. The need for funding classroom assistance to allow inclusion programs to succeed in our

schools is no less compelling today than it was 50 years ago.