

Submitter: Patti Green
On Behalf Of: Sacred Organizing Coalition
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to making sure every child gets the education and support they deserve in Oregon.

As a concerned family member of a child who attended Grant High School, I am writing to you today to advocate for the passage of HB 2953 and legislation that fully funds special education services. I am also with the Sacred Organizing Coalition, whose organizations and initiatives share a commitment to organizing the hundreds of community-based teams we work with - and the thousands of everyday Oregonians that are part of these local groups - to move us toward an Oregon where all belong.

Several years back, my niece struggled in the traditional learning environment. She was made fun of and bullied and therefore stopped participating in the classroom because she was afraid to speak up. She slipped behind in school and dropped out. We eventually got her to participate in the community college program to finish her education and get her high school diploma. A few years later, she was diagnosed with ADHD. While she is a productive member of society, she struggles to trust authority figures and would-be mentors. Her lack of support at the secondary school level has effected her ability to thrive and reach her higher potential in life.

I believe that every student in Oregon deserves the support they need. I believe that teachers and staff should be equipped with the resources necessary for every child to succeed.

But because of an outdated funding formula designed over 30 years ago, Oregon is currently leaving out over 19,000 students or almost 1/4th of the 80,000 students in its funding. That's even though the need has drastically increased for special education services, with diagnoses for those with autism or anxiety and children with other needs continuing to rise.

Doing nothing means young people not getting basic support for their needs. It means more teachers and staff burnout from not having enough resourcing. Underfunded mandates mean local schools having to choose cuts in various programs. Doing nothing affects all of us.

We cannot just let an old law from the 1990s dictate whose children get to belong in Oregon schools. As a family member of a child who needed these services and was not properly identified, all of our children belong here. Our funding should reflect this

truth.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Sincerely,

Patti Green