

Submitter: Kara Harris  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953  
February 15, 2025

Dear Oregon Legislators:

I am writing to advocate for fully funding Special Education, and for the adoption of the four initiatives that will support critical services for children with special needs. I hope to give you some insight into how the funding will impact children by telling you a little bit about my sixteen year-old daughter, Angela, who has significant special needs. Angela is a student in the Clatskanie School District, which currently serves 21% of its students with special education services, much higher than the state average of 14.8%.

Special Education Cap Funding (HB 2953)- Since funding for SPED services was capped in 1991, the number of children eligible for special education services has risen sharply. Districts are committed to serving all children in need, but without additional funding, other programs and services have to be cut. In recent years, the Clatskanie School District has increased staff to meet the growing needs, but at a cost.

Increase High-Cost Disability Grants (HB 2448)- HCD grants provide funding for children with significant needs, such as 1:1 support. To be compliant with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), students must receive an education in the least restrictive environment possible to meet their needs, and extra support is often required. The growing number of children in Special Education, and the increase in children with disability-related behavioral and social-emotional needs makes the HDC grants imperative.

Increase Support for Regional Inclusive Services (Budget Item)- RIS supports children with low-incidence disability to receive specialized services. My daughter, Angela, has Sturge-Weber Syndrome. As a result, she experiences visual impairment and orthopedic impairment, both low-incidence disabilities. The specialists that support her are crucial to her success.

Increase Support for Early Intervention Services (Budget Item)- According to The Children's League (<https://www.tclny.org/benefits-of-early-intervention>), "Well-designed early childhood interventions have been found to generate a return to society ranging from \$1.80 to \$17.07 for each dollar spent on the program". By

investing in our children early, we are setting them up for success, and also limiting the cost of providing benefits later. My family has experienced the impact of early intervention personally, and the developmental gains that our daughter made before age three are immeasurable.

I have mentioned a few impacts on my family. We are just one family. Over the years, my daughter's services have included: Transportation, Nursing, 1:1 Support, Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapies, Vision Services, Hearing Services, Home Visiting, Specially Designed Instruction, Extended School Year Services. All of these services have played a critical role in helping her become a thriving, successful student. Please support the full funding of Special Education in Oregon.