

Submitter: Peter FitzGerald
On Behalf Of: Self
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

I spent 47 years of my career in Special Education teaching at the local level (both middle school and high school), working as a specialist at the Oregon Department of Education, and working for University of Oregon in their Department of Special Education focusing on pathways to adulthood once a Special Education Student exhausted their entitlement to a Free and Appropriate Education at the age of 21. I know firsthand the funding challenges included in being able to prepare our most vulnerable students for a productive life in our society. Also realizing that Special Education Students are more like us than different than us humanized my approach to education. Is the 11% funding cap reasonable? Most would say generally yes. But no two Special Education Students are alike so a cookie cutter approach is simply not feasible. There are many students that require far more than the funding received to adequately serve them in a fair, individualized, and appropriate manner. Students with extreme behavior problems or complex neurological conditions are a few that come to mind. In some cases, Districts are compelled to find outside placements for students they simply cannot provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to and they have to pay tuition to outside resources, a hefty bill to take on. I strongly encourage the movement of this House Bill 2953 on to its next steps towards approval and funding. We have to consider that Local Districts must have adequate funding to meet the demands of an extremely wide diversity of students and appreciate your attention to this matter.