

Submitter: Mari Alexander  
On Behalf Of: HB 2953  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

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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 psychotherapist practicing in Portland, Oregon with students from pre-school to college and their parents I am very concerned that special education services will continue to not be available for all who need it. Working with these families I am very aware of the toll it takes on all children in a family when one or more of the children in it are not getting the services they need to develop and succeed. This puts enormous pressure on the whole family and creates undue stress in already stressful situations.

Special education is underfunded because the state puts a cap on how much it will pay. The state now provides funding for up to 10% of students but 14% of students quality for services so 3% of students have no funding available for them. Schools (and families) just have to figure it out, which impacts what services there are (making them even thinner) and stresses parents and siblings. Because of this underfunded mandate children are not getting the services they are entitled to. This, in turn will put more pressure on teachers and on families and could show up detrimentally in the years to come for these underserved students.

This law has not been changed in many years. It is time now to increase funding for special education. I am advocating for the passage of HB 2953 and legislation that fully funds special education services for all who need it. 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 – this is what Oregon stands for – a place where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,  
Mari Alexander

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