



**Mission:** FACT Oregon empowers families, youth, and communities to navigate disability systems, advocating together for disability justice and policy change so that people with disabilities have what they need to thrive at home, in school, and in their communities.

February 17, 2025

Chair Courtney Neron

Vice-Chair April Dobson

Vice-Chair Emily McIntire

Members of the House Committee on Education

**Support for HB 2953 – Special Education Cap Funding**

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

FACT Oregon is a family-led nonprofit that supports families, youth with disabilities, and partners in holding high expectations, navigating special education and disability systems, and advocating for the supports needed to thrive at home, in school, and in the community. Since 2012, we have served as the state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for special education.

Every child has the right to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, Oregon’s outdated cap on special education funding limits the ability of school districts to provide the necessary services and supports to students with disabilities. This arbitrary cap—set in 1991 at 11%—**no longer reflects the reality of our schools**, where the statewide average is now 14.8%, and some districts exceed 18%.

While lifting the cap is a necessary step, simply removing it without funding the additional weights would result in an unfunded mandate. School districts already struggle to provide legally required services, and without HB 2953’s \$400-450M investment, raising the cap alone does not solve the problem.

Oregon’s failure to fully fund special education has dire consequences:

- Students with disabilities experience some of the worst educational outcomes in the state, including disproportionately high dropout rates and low graduation rates.
- Families struggle to secure necessary services, often facing delays, denials, or reductions in support due to resource constraints.
- Educators are stretched beyond capacity, leading to burnout, high turnover, and fewer qualified professionals to meet student needs.

This legislation is not just about funding, it is about ensuring all students in Oregon receive a quality education. FACT Oregon joins a broad coalition of families, educators, administrators, and disability rights organizations **in full support of HB 2953. We urge this committee to pass HB 2953** with a full funding commitment to remove the special education cap responsibly.

Thank you for your time and leadership in ensuring that Oregon upholds its commitment to students with disabilities.

Thank you,

Christy Reese, Executive Director, FACT Oregon