

Submitter: Sarah Jean

On Behalf Of:

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.

I am a parent of a diagnosed autistic boy who just turned five. He was diagnosed at 2 and 1/2 years old it has been a very hard journey and without the resources he has I'm not sure how he would've even come as far as he has now, we still struggle but can't imagine life without the support he has and there would be no continued progress without these supports. My child attends Alyce Hatch Center in Bend Oregon a special education school and this allows him to have a school experience and get the support he needs. I am writing 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.

Every single student deserves support that they desperately need. This is a whole generation of people that need our help they are our future and their education is just as important. The teachers and the staff need to be equipped with the resources needed to help each and every one of these children to be successful. The outdated funding formula designed over 30 years ago means Oregon is currently leaving out over 19,000 students or almost 1/4th of the 80,000 students in its funding. The need for support has drastically increased for special education services, with diagnoses for those with autism, ADD ADHD or anxiety plus children with other needs continuing to rise. I cannot stand by and do nothing we must not by doing nothing means these people not getting basic support for their needs. It means more teachers and staff burnout and potentially quitting from not having enough resourcing. Underfunded mandates mean local schools having to choose cuts in various programs.

This affects every single one of us.

We cannot just let this old law from the 1990s dictate whose children get to belong in Oregon schools. These same people help contribute to our society and they are still a big part of society some of which are diagnosed now as adults since we know the same supports we have now were not available back then and they work, pay taxes and are just as a part of society as anyone else is.

As a parent of a child in the special education system who needs these services, all our children belong here and our funding should mirror this.

Thank you for your time and consideration.