

2/17/2025

Chair Neron, Co-Chairs Dobson and McIntire and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Charlotte Sandstrom. I am a Special Education Aide at William Walker Elementary School in Beaverton Oregon where I work in an Independent Skills Center program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Without any additional funding, my students won't be able to get the services they need.

In my class we have a total of 13 kindergartners and 1st graders. For comparisons, in Denmark where I am originally from, that number would be 6-8 students.

Most are on the autism spectrum, 3 are in wheelchairs and several have high medical needs.

All need a significant amount of adult support.

13 students like ours in a classroom is simply too many.

One student might start to yell.

Then another student who is sensitive to noise starts yelling as well.

A third student starts yelling because they copy sounds.

A fourth student starts running around class because it's simply too much chaos and so on we go.

As staff we are used to chaos but with the amount of students and staff there is simply too many “fires” to be put out and we are understaffed. Obviously this means that we spend a huge amount of time helping regulate students and it is becoming harder and harder to provide a learning environment.

Personally I find it very difficult to face parents every day, knowing that they believe their child was in a school learning environment when in reality it is becoming harder and harder to provide the services that our students deserve because of the resources we are granted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, I respectfully urge a yes vote on House Bill 2953.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Sandstrom, PARA II, William Walker Elementary School