

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

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2953, which seeks to remove the cap on special education funding in Oregon. As an Early Childhood Special Education Specialist with High Desert ESD in Bend, I see firsthand the critical need for adequate funding to support our youngest learners with disabilities.

Currently, the funding cap limits the resources available to provide the individualized support that children with disabilities require to thrive. Our programs are already stretched thin, with high caseloads, limited staff, and growing demands. Lifting this cap would ensure that funding reflects actual student needs, rather than an outdated percentage that does not account for the increasing number of children requiring specialized services.

As a teacher working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), I have the privilege of teaching far more than just academics. My role extends to helping students communicate their needs through a variety of methods, including AAC (augmentative and alternative communication), sign language, and verbal language. I have had the joy of hearing students say their first words at the age of five, an incredibly special moment that highlights the power of effective communication.

In addition to communication, I help students build meaningful relationships with adults and peers, even if that connection starts simply with a peer looking at them. I teach life skills such as washing hands, coping skills to manage emotions, and play skills like stacking blocks. Together, we explore new interests, and I collaborate with other specialists within the High Desert ESD and beyond to provide the most comprehensive support possible for each student.

Early intervention is essential. Research shows that providing high-quality special education services in early childhood significantly improves long-term outcomes—helping children develop essential communication, motor, and social-emotional skills that set the foundation for lifelong success. Without sufficient funding, many children risk missing critical early supports, which could lead to greater challenges in K-12 and beyond.

Furthermore, this bill would help reduce educator burnout, improve staff retention, and ensure that the most vulnerable students receive the services they are entitled to. Special education should never be underfunded due to arbitrary limits—it should be fully supported to meet the actual needs of students.

I love my job, I love my students, and I care deeply about their well-being and future. But I also know that these children deserve a better future—one where they are given the resources and opportunities to thrive. The current funding cap limits our ability to provide the best possible education and support, and that's why I strongly urge you to support HB 2953. This bill would allow us to better meet the needs of students with disabilities and ensure that they receive the individualized support they deserve.

I urge you to support HB 2953 and ensure that every child with a disability in Oregon has access to the resources they need to succeed. Thank you for your time and commitment to the education of all students.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Moran

*Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)*

*Early Childhood Special Education Teacher*

*Certified K-12 Teacher*