

Submitter: Kristen Camacho
On Behalf Of: Child
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.

As a concerned parent who's child currently attends Alyce Hatch early intervention/special education school, I am writing to you today 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.

My son has been receiving early intervention/special education services since the age of 18 months. The services provided to my son have helped him in more ways than you can imagine. We would be lost without these services. This area in our education system needs more resources and funding to be able to provide children like mine a pathway for success.

I believe that every student in Oregon deserves the support they need. I believe that teachers and staff should be equipped with the resources necessary for every child to succeed.

But because of an outdated funding formula designed over 30 years ago, Oregon is currently leaving out over 19,000 students or almost 1/4th of the 80,000 students in its funding. That's even though the need has drastically increased for special education services, with diagnoses for those with autism or anxiety and children with other needs continuing to rise.

Doing nothing means young people not getting basic support for their needs. It means more teachers and staff burnout from not having enough resourcing. Underfunded mandates mean local schools having to choose cuts in various programs. Doing nothing affects all of us.

We cannot just let an old law from the 1990s dictate whose children get to belong in Oregon schools. As a parent of a child who needs these services, all of our children belong here. Our funding should reflect this truth.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Kristen Camacho/Mother