

Submitter: Jessica Barnes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

As a parent of an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep disparity currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are essentially funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Public charter school students are public school students, and it's past time to fund their education fairly.

Almost every public charter school parent has a story as to why a public charter school became the right fit for their child. Many started out in traditional public schools, but couldn't receive the education they deserved, often due to learning challenges that required specialized attention beyond what a public school classroom could provide, or physical, developmental, or mental health challenges that public schools simply couldn't, or wouldn't, accommodate for.

We chose to send our children to a charter school for a couple of reasons. One is because of their vastly different learning styles and temperaments. We have one child who will sit and do worksheets and listen to a full day's lecturing just fine, and our other child needs to be able to move around in the classroom and have more freedom in his thinking. We ended up choosing our specific charter school because of its expedient learning style because we wanted our kids to be able to actually be kids longer. We wanted them to be able to deep dive into topics they were curious about and be able to fully immerse themselves into these topics that are covered in class. We wanted them to have smaller class sizes and have more opportunity for learning than they would have at our local public school in the public school system.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. Many buildings are old and in need of upgrades, students can't access transportation services, food security programs are limited, and schools lack essential school supplies and mental health resources. By passing HB 3444, you can fix this ongoing disparity and provide fair funding for public charter school students who deeply need it.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Thank you,  
Jessica Barnes