

Submitter: Courtney Long
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

House Committee On Education
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

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.

My daughter started off in public school where she wasn't being challenged to reach her full potential. She seemed disengaged and uninterested in school. There were too many students in a class and not enough one on one interaction with teachers. Since she has had the opportunity to go to a public charter school she has flourished. Her learning is being focused more on things that interest her including art, creative thinking and environmental studies. She can now interact with other like-minded children in a smaller class setting and we have seen an overall improvement in her mood and intellectual abilities. There is a strong bond between a public charter school and its families which is another plus that traditional public schools really don't offer.

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,
Courtney Long