

Submitter: Nathalie Doherty  
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 oldest daughter has autism and a handful of other mental health and learning disabilities. She learned differently than most and she needed to be at a school where differences were celebrated and where she would have been given the support necessary. We found that at Springwater Environmental Sciences School located in Oregon City, Oregon. She started in kindergarten and graduated 8th grade last Spring. In June, she will finish her freshman year in high school where she is receiving top grades and is a leader among her peers. The charter school environment allowed our family to provide a space that was necessary for our daughter's learning and to be engaged in a community where parents and school staff are dedicated to achieve the mission and vision of the school. Because Springwater only is provided 80% of funding per student from the state, we are not able to provide as much support as we would like and certain services that kids can get in non-charter schools. For charter schools that own their own facilities, particularly older facilities, the funding crisis is magnified.

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,

Nathalie Doherty