

Submitter: Amy Brewer
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 now is the time to finally 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 Coburg Community Charter School for our three boys because of the horror stories we hear (and know to be true) about public school classrooms, including major behavioral issues that cannot be addressed by teachers because their hands are tied when it comes to addressing challenging behaviors. At our small charter school, our kids are given the specialized attention they need and deserve in a small school setting that emphasizes community values. We are so thankful for this school and all that it offers are children and our small community.

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. Further, while we have been lucky enough to attract highly skilled teachers, many of them take a pay cut to teach at our school. We would love to be able to pay our wonderful teachers what they deserve for the extremely hard work that they do. 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.

Sincerely,

Amy L. Brewer