

Submitter: Cody Ness
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 an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep injustice currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are effectively funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Students at Ridgeline Montessori Charter School are public school students, and it's past time to fund our education fairly.

Each student here at Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School has a story about why this school has made a positive difference in their life. 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.

The reason why Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School is important to me is because I have spent my entire schooling here, I have found the best friends I've ever had here and they empower kids to become whatever they want.

Another great thing about the Montessori teaching style is that you can have a personal connection with all of your teachers and students because you can talk to them and work out problems together which builds community and develops great social skills for later in life. You can learn from the kids that are older and teach the kids that are younger because there are usually 2-3 grades in one classroom.

You get to present in front of the class which teaches you how to handle public speaking. There are less bullies than traditional, larger schools because they teach you how to not resort to violence and instead find other ways of working out conflict. This is what makes the Montessori style special but that's only one of the reasons that Ridgeline is so great, the other reason is the people that are here, and that is why I am so glad I go to Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter school.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. This directly impacts me as a student. 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.

Sincerely,

Student of Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School.