

Submitter: Ella W
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.

Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School is important to me because it's a flexible school that meets my needs. I go to the learning center once a day which is a place to read and write with some other classmates with the help of the SPED teacher. The students at Ridgeline Montessori are able to get help whenever they need it and get longer time to work on class work. Ridgeline is a smaller school. The kids get to make a lot of choices for themselves like what to work on at different times and they are able to have breaks if they need them. At Ridgeline everyone helps out with classroom and community jobs and other fundraisers. We learn to do lots of work like math and humanities and I like that it is kindergarten through 8th grade because there's a lot of different ages and grades at the school in each level and not just 6th, 7th, and 8th like a normal middle school would be. I have been going to Ridgeline for a very long time and I really like it and think it's a very important school for other students like me.

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, Ella W.