

Submitter: Willow A
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 my charter school is important to me is because it is one of the only schools I feel like I fit in. Everybody here is a little quirky, which just makes me feel more welcome. I have my best friends here, and one of my best memories was from Ridgeline. Every year, Ridgeline middle school went on an Adventure trip. This was my first year in middle school, and I was nervous but it turns out I didn't have to be. Me and one of my best friends were in the same cabin, and one night we told scary stories and played Exploding kittens. I remember doing archery, playing gaga ball, and werewolf. But my favorite part was the campfire night. On one of the nights there, everyone gathered around a campfire and ate smores. After that, people started presenting skits that they had worked on over the school year. I was so excited when my group presented "The Adventures of Butterbruh". I had put my own spin on the Princess Bride for the trip, and let me just say, it was a hit. At one point, everybody clapped and sang along with "Indigo Montana"! I had so much fun. It was a trip I will never forget.

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,
Willow