

Submitter: Monika DeShazer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

I would like to voice my support for HB 2953.

My name is Monik DeShazer. I have worked in special education in Oregon public schools for over 15 years. This includes as an educational assistant, and currently, as a physical therapist assistant. In addition to that, both my children have received special education support through an IEP (individualized education program).

I see first-hand how crucial the need for special education services is. My 11-year-old son was diagnosed with autism in kindergarten, and later with ADHD. Throughout elementary school he has received accommodations and support to help ease his anxiety, prevent sensory overload, and learn the social-emotional skills needed to succeed in his school environment.

As a physical therapist assistant, I provide direct support to students and their classroom staff to ensure they have access to their education in the safest and least restrict environment. This includes working with children with complex medical needs, training staff how to assist them to walk, use the restroom, access stairs, participate in PE, transfer out of their wheelchair, drive a power wheelchair, and change positions throughout the day. The list goes on, depending on the student.

It was shocking to learn that our funding cap of 11% was created in the 1990s, and Oregon has the lowest cap in the nation. We know the population of students in special education has risen since then and continues to grow. There are many factors as to why- but the fact remains. The 11% cap is not enough to fund the services that our students need and deserve.

All children have the right to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. We must have more support for special education services. This will benefit everyone.