

Submitter: John Simmons

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

As a special education teacher in Oregon, I fully support the removal of the percentage cap on the amount of moneys that are distributed from the State School Fund to school districts for students eligible for special education as a child with a disability.

Oregon ranks 45th in the US for public schools, and I attribute a large part of this to the percentage cap. I have worked for three different districts in my 10-year career (Gladstone, Parkrose, and West Linn - Wilsonville), and each one of them has had more than 11% of the student population in the special education program. In each case, we have had to serve more students with less, to the detriment of all of all students, and particularly those with the most significant support needs. Adequate staffing, appropriate curriculum, and specialized programming are all instrumental to providing an equitable education. All students deserve opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive to the best of their ability, and the current 11% cap significantly impedes schools' ability to provide these to students.

Please listen to me and the voices of other educators when we say that removing the percentage cap is a much-needed step to elevate the educational environment and quality in Oregon.