

Submitter: Brandi Lindstrom
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

I am writing today in strong support of HB 2953, which seeks to remove the arbitrary 11% cap on special education funding in Oregon. As both a parent of children receiving special education services and the leader of an organization that serves families of children with special needs in our rural county, I see firsthand the inequities this cap creates and the lasting harm it does to our most vulnerable students.

In rural communities like ours, resources for special education are already stretched thin. The 11% funding cap means that students who require specialized instruction, support services, and individualized education plans (IEPs) are not receiving the equitable education they are entitled to. Schools are forced to make tough decisions about how to allocate limited funding, often leaving students without the full support they need to thrive. This is not just an issue of funding—it is an issue of equity, access, and basic fairness.

The current cap is an outdated and unjust limitation that disproportionately affects districts with higher percentages of students requiring special education services. It assumes that special education needs are evenly distributed across all districts, which is simply not the case. Rural areas, in particular, have fewer resources, fewer specialized staff, and fewer alternative options for families. Without equitable funding, we are denying students their right to an appropriate and meaningful education. As a parent, I have experienced the heartbreak of watching my children struggle because the system does not have the capacity to meet their needs. As an advocate, I have worked with countless families who are desperate for equitable support but are met with barriers due to inadequate funding. It is unacceptable that our children's futures are being compromised because of an arbitrary percentage. Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed, regardless of where they live or how many other students in their district require special education services.

By passing HB 2953, you have the opportunity to create a more equitable funding system that ensures all students receive the education and services they need. Our children should not be statistics! They should be seen, supported, and given the chance to reach their full potential.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 2953 and remove this cap that has long denied our students an equitable education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brandi Lindstrom

Executive Director

First Steps Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

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