

Support for HB 2448

High Cost Disability

Chair Nathanson, Vice-chairs Reschke and Walters, Committee members

For the record, my name is Robin Roemer, Vice President for Legislation, speaking on behalf of the Oregon PTA. We represent families across the state of both general and special education students. For over 125 years, we have advocated for all children here in Oregon, and today we support HB 2448.

With our school districts severely limited by state constitutional law in their ability to raise revenue for students, and the federal level in disarray, it's time for the state legislature to step up. We must hold ourselves accountable for ensuring all students—regardless of their needs—receive the quality education guaranteed by Article 8 of our state constitution.

Accountability in the K-12 system is often highly complex, to say the least. The High-Cost Disability Fund is not that. School districts are reimbursed for the essential and intricate work they do. It doesn't get more straightforward than that.

The question before the committee and legislature is clear: Will the state legislature fulfill its obligation to fully fund the high-cost disability fund?

Because if you don't fully fund it, these children, who are the most disadvantaged in nearly every area of their lives and whose families are often struggling, will have to compete with all the other pressing needs of school districts over a pot of funding that is too small to begin with.

Governor Kotek emphasized the importance of accountability this week. Today, we hold you accountable to fully fund education for our most vulnerable students.

We understand that the state has its financial challenges. Oregon PTA stands ready to collaborate with the committee to ensure the state has sufficient revenue to fulfill its most basic functions, such as providing Oregon's children - including those with complex needs - the education they deserve. Please fully fund the high-cost disability fund and vote yes on HB 2448. None of our students can wait. They need funding now. Thank you.

Robin Roemer, VP for Legislation, Oregon PTA