

Submitter: Kelsey Pederson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

Dear Chair Huron and Members of the Education Committee,

I am providing testimony in support of HB 3444 and asking for your support in its passage. My name is Kelsey Pederson and my family and I live in Bend, Oregon. Our child started at our local public school and transferred to Bend International School for the community and specific opportunities that it provides. We value belonging and support for all students, families, cultures, races, beliefs, classes, etc. This school is dedicated to global learning and teaching students the value of each of these intersections while teaching the core curriculum of the state. They also offer immersive Spanish which is not offered enough in our community and other extra curricular art actives which are not offered in the public district schools. These opportunities have been invaluable to my children. I am also a mental health provider in the community and it is encouraging to be a part of a school community that values mental wellness and healthy relationships and fosters those values in their students. It is an important part of building a whole hearted human and community. We hope for this opportunity to continue to be accessible to anyone and everyone in our community as well as other communities.

All public school students in Oregon deserve the same investment in their education, whether attending a public charter school or public district-run school. Right now students in public charter schools receive 48% of the funding that their peers in district-run school receive, an unsettling fact from a recent report by ECONorthwest. My child's education is worth more than 48 cents on the dollar.

Our state's initial - and now outdated - charter school legislation is not in line with our state's current priorities.

It diverts funding for early education and intervention, with K - 8 students receiving only 80% of their intended per pupil funding.

It diverts funding for our historically underserved communities, with less than half of the intended state weighed funds flowing through to serve those children.

It blocks access to federal funding, which is specifically intended to serve historically underserved students. This includes no access to IDEA, Title I, and Title III.

I urge you as a constituent and as a parent to support HB 3444, have it referred to committee, and ultimately vote in support of this very necessary fix in our public education funding.

With Appreciation,

Kelsey Pederson, LCSW