

Submitter: andrew gauger

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2583

Dear Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to you today as a concerned parent and an advocate for equitable education in Oregon. My name is Andrew Gauger, and my son, Jacob Gauger, is a student at Baker's Early College. I am deeply troubled by the current disparities in education funding that unfairly disadvantage students attending virtual charter schools. I urge you to support House Bill 2583, a critical piece of legislation that seeks to rectify this inequity.

As a parent of a virtual charter student, I firmly believe that every child, regardless of their chosen educational path, deserves equal access to the resources necessary for a quality education. For too long, virtual charter schools and their students have been unjustly overlooked in the allocation of crucial funding. This systemic inequity creates a significant disadvantage for these students, limiting their opportunities and hindering their academic growth. House Bill 2583 offers a vital solution by ensuring that virtual charter schools receive funding commensurate with that of traditional public schools, thereby leveling the playing field and providing these students with the support they rightfully deserve.

My son, Jacob, is a bright and motivated student who has found a unique and beneficial learning environment at Baker's Early College. He is thriving in the virtual setting, accelerating through his coursework, and benefiting immensely from the opportunity to interact with mature peers who share his dedication to academic excellence. In a traditional school setting, Jacob sometimes struggled to find his place, but the virtual environment has allowed him to flourish. This personalized approach to education has proven to be an invaluable asset to his academic journey, fostering his intellectual curiosity and enabling him to learn at his own pace.

However, the current funding structure jeopardizes the very existence of programs like the one Jacob is enrolled in. Virtual charter schools, despite providing a valuable and effective educational alternative for many students, often operate with significantly fewer resources than their traditional counterparts. This disparity directly impacts the quality of education they can provide, limiting access to essential resources such as qualified teachers, up-to-date technology, and comprehensive support services.

The lack of adequate funding not only affects the students currently enrolled in virtual charter schools but also undermines the principle of school choice. Parents, like

myself, who have chosen this educational path for their children, should not be penalized for seeking an environment that best meets their individual needs. We should not be forced to compromise on the quality of education simply because we have opted for a non-traditional setting.

House Bill 2583 represents a crucial step towards ensuring that all Oregon students, regardless of where they attend school, have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This bill recognizes the importance of providing equitable funding to virtual charter schools, acknowledging the unique needs and contributions of these institutions. By supporting this legislation, you will be sending a clear message that you value all students and are committed to creating a fair and just education system for everyone.

I urge you to consider the profound impact that inadequate funding has on students like my son, Jacob, and on the future of education in Oregon. Please support House Bill 2583 and help us ensure that all students have the resources they need to succeed. Let's work together to make education fair for all Oregon students, regardless of their school type.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Andrew Gauger