

Submitter: T
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444
House Committee On Education
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

As an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep injustice currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are effectively funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Students at Ridgeline Montessori Charter School are public school students, and it's past time to fund our education fairly.

Each student here at Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School has a story about why this school has made a positive difference in their life. Many started out in traditional public schools, but couldn't receive the education they deserved, often due to learning challenges that required specialized attention beyond what a public school classroom could provide, or physical, developmental, or mental health challenges that public schools simply couldn't, or wouldn't, accommodate.

Here is why this school is important to me:

Ridgeline Montessori is special to me because..

It is a place that I have known for so long. I have been at Ridgeline since I was a kindergartener until eighth grade, and I would not change that. Since my dad is a teacher at a "normal" middle school, I know the differences between that versus Ridgeline Montessori.

Ridgeline Montessori carries smart, loving, and kind students. I know that unlike other schools, harshness or bullying is not very common, and Ridgeline as a whole knows how to join together as a community and spread kindness.

I think of the wayfinder activity that our class did, (the one where we gave everyone compliments). My dad, as a teacher at Monroe middle school, said that if his class did that activity, they would most likely insult anyone that they were paired with. This made me very grateful to be at Ridgeline, where we could compliment each other with ease, even if we didn't necessarily 'like' the person we were paired with.

Ridgeline has a lot of academically smart students, which is great, but what makes

us a beautiful community is the smartness that we use to conclude that we are all equal, and we can all accept each other.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. This directly impacts me as a student. Many buildings are old and in need of upgrades, students can't access transportation services, food security programs are limited, and schools lack essential school supplies and mental health resources. By passing HB 3444, you can fix this ongoing disparity and provide fair funding for public charter school students who deeply need it.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Sincerely,

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