

Submitter: Kathryn Brumbelow
On Behalf Of: area homeschooling families
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3624

Senator Lieber and Oregon Senators,

On behalf of my children and the future of their education, and concern for the education of future generations of Oregonians, I oppose HB3624 as currently written as well as any bill written to allocate tax dollars to private organizations. You may argue that a family isn't a private organization, but it most certainly is. Homeschooling families have maintained this distinction as much as possible in this state and so far it has been honored. I am privileged to live in a place that welcomes a diversity of educational methods and recognizes the achievements of its homeschoolers.

I have had four homeschooled children, ages 9-15, and have not been inconvenienced by testing. A test costs about \$60 currently, so I set aside \$30 per year for testing per child. This means that if each of my children had to be tested four times this would total \$960 over the course of their education. Some of my children are now enrolled in schools, so this isn't the case particularly for us. However, this \$960 would become more expensive if the state had to provide administration for the test. You know how this works. This then inflates the cost of the tests themselves over time. The administration would fall on the backs of ESDs, already struggling with cuts this year. The state currently makes a requirement that homeschoolers be tested, which I also oppose because it is so clearly unnecessary, but it is a minor inconvenience compared to the burden that this bill would create for ESDs, school districts, and homeschooling families.

There are a growing number of homeschooling families and we don't want this bill. I have not spoken with a single person who homeschools their kid and thinks this is a need. It therefore surprises me that this bill has made it this far. I would be interested to hear testimony from homeschool families in support of this bill and have considered what long-term effects it might have.

A 216% increase in the number of homeschooled students (967 students) occurred in 2020 in NWRESA, my district. The following year there was a more modest increase of 729 students (citation from <https://www.axios.com/local/portland/2023/10/11/oregon-homeschool-boom-pandemic>). If this trend continues, as it no doubt will, the state budget will have to allocate more funds to administrate homeschool testing. Federal cuts to the Department of Education make it unwise for the state of Oregon to invest in a program that will have an increasingly costly effect on the already stretched state education budget. If Multnomah and Washington counties are any indicator of how

many families will continue to choose homeschooling, the fiscal impact is going to be measurable and unless some research has gone into the cost of this program, it is irresponsible to add it to the budget. It will create an unnecessary burden.

In addition, school districts already lose funding for students who choose to be homeschooled. With this bill, the state would be redistributing resources away from public school students even more toward homeschooled students, creating unnecessary division and frustration for teachers, administrators, and students alike.

If students and their families are concerned about the financial burden of testing, resources are already available to them through local initiatives. It is perhaps true that this bill would be helpful for those in rural communities. With this in mind, if implemented at all, it should be tested first in smaller rural communities, where property taxes from homeschoolers go to support public schools, as a pilot program before deciding that it would be wise or feasible for the entire state.

This bill is not endorsed by ESDs as far as I am aware, but it would make sense to at least get their input before further consideration. It will, after all, be impacting them greatly.

Thank you for your time, service, and hearing.

Katy Brumbelow

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