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February 12, 2026

Chair Lew Frederick
Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber
Members of the Senate Education Committee

RE: Opposition to SB 1572

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Dianna J. Hansen**, and I am the Executive Director of the **Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN)**. CODSN is a family-led nonprofit serving children, youth, and families experiencing disability across eight counties in Oregon. Our work centers on disability justice, family partnership, and ensuring that students with disabilities are supported to thrive at home, in school, and in their communities.

I am writing to respectfully urge the committee to **oppose SB 1572**.

While I deeply appreciate the intent to support educators and address real challenges facing Oregon's K-12 system, this bill relies on approaches that are **not supported by evidence**, **risk violating federal disability law**, and would **disproportionately harm students with disabilities and those with unmet behavioral, emotional, or mental health needs**—particularly in rural communities like the ones we serve.

Student Discipline and Classroom Removal

SB 1572 significantly expands the authority to remove students from classrooms using **broad and subjective standards**, such as repeated interference with instruction. Decades of research—and our daily experience—show that exclusionary discipline does not improve student behavior or academic outcomes. Instead, it increases disengagement, academic failure, and long-term involvement with more costly systems.

For students with disabilities, these provisions raise serious legal and ethical concerns. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees students a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** and requires schools to use individualized, positive behavioral interventions when behavior is related to disability. Increasing

classroom removals without first ensuring these supports are in place undermines those protections and exposes schools to legal risk.

In rural districts, the harm is compounded. Many schools do not have immediate access to school psychologists, behavioral specialists, or licensed mental health professionals. Removing a student without the necessary supports in place does not solve the problem—it simply displaces it, often onto families who already lack access to services.

Third-Grade Retention

SB 1572's mandatory third-grade retention provisions are deeply concerning. Retention has been studied extensively and consistently shown **not** to improve long-term literacy outcomes. Instead, it is associated with higher dropout rates and increased disengagement—especially for students with disabilities, students living in poverty, and students from historically underserved communities.

Retention is not a substitute for early intervention, adequate staffing, or sustained instructional support. Codifying retention into law places the burden of systemic underinvestment onto children, rather than addressing the root causes of reading challenges.

Importantly, IDEA does not require students with disabilities to be at grade level to access general education. Policies that functionally gatekeep advancement risk conflicting with federal law and inclusive education principles.

Essential Learning Skills as a Graduation Barrier

Reinstating Essential Learning Skills as a graduation requirement also raises serious concerns. Oregon previously paused this requirement after determining that it was **burdensome**, did not meaningfully improve learning outcomes, and created **disproportionate barriers for students with disabilities and other underserved students**.

Graduation should reflect meaningful learning and preparation—but a single proficiency requirement does not capture the diverse ways students demonstrate knowledge and skill. Reinstating this requirement without addressing its documented harms risks repeating past mistakes and increasing inequities.

What Students and Educators Actually Need

There is no shortage of evidence-based solutions that *do* work. What schools need most is **capacity-building**, not punitive mandates. Proven approaches include:

- Fully funding tiered interventions and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

- Expanding school-based mental and behavioral health services
- Training educators in trauma-informed, restorative, culturally responsive, and disability justice-based practices
- Strengthening family-school partnerships, particularly for families navigating disability systems

SB 1572 does not invest in these solutions.

Conclusion

From my perspective as a disability advocate, a rural systems leader, and a parent partner to thousands of families, SB 1572 moves Oregon **away** from evidence-based, inclusive, and legally sound education policy. It risks increasing exclusion, widening disparities, and placing schools in legally vulnerable positions—without addressing the underlying needs driving student behavior and learning challenges.

I respectfully urge the committee to **vote no on SB 1572** and to instead support policies that invest in supports, services, and partnerships that keep students in school, supported, and learning.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Oregon's students.

Sincerely,

Dianna J. Hansen
Executive Director
Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN)