

Dear Chair Alonso Leon and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brittany Ruiz and I am an advocate for many families in Oregon

I want to thank Lisa Merrick with Rep Alonso-Leon's office and Chair Alonso Leon for scheduling this informational hearing regarding HB3350.

I want to thank Anne for her robust input on IDEA and the requirements for ODE and Mr. Greenberg's follow up on the legal aspects and Roberta from FACT.

CASE #1: Child non-verbal, severe developmental delays, extensive allergies, poor eyesight did not get any instructional, special education or therapy during the shutdown, while other kids in his school received daily instructional time via Zoom. All of the child's special therapies were totally stopped along with his 1:1 Aide. He physically and mentally

regressed to include self-injurious behavior. The only option given to the parent were Zoom calls. Meanwhile families with Cadillac insurance were able to make up the lost special needs therapies through private clinics, yet students with disabilities getting serviced by the schools were not given the same accommodation.

CASE #2: Child in school was thriving. Has an IEP. Is from a low income, Hispanic family. Parents had to work, so children were left home by themselves. Child is now severely behind and the School District sent the family a warning that failure of their child not attending school was a Class C felony. The School did NOT make any accommodations with the parents, call them or address the fact that their child flat out could not do online school. I reported this to ODE's Director who said the letter was acceptable. The Superintendent on the other hand made it very clear that there will be NO more letters of such going to these parents.

CASE #3: Child with downs syndrome was crying daily due to online school. Mother asked during summer time if his educational needs that he lost during the shutdown and continues to not provide will be made up or compensated? The District said NO. No accommodations were made to the child who physically could not do Zoom and was mentally and emotionally in trauma over the loss of his special education services that were provided on a daily basis, including his own 1:1 Aide.

CASE #4: Another child with a genetic condition and completely paralyzed from the neck down was totally excluded from school, no support, no accommodations despite the parents working hard with the district. He just resumed in person school last week having lost an entire year.

Final point, while working with Oregon DHS in my county it was brought up that there was a sharp skyrocketing of “Failure to Cope” by parents due to their children’s extensive needs not being

supported by the schools or their wrap around services.

I believe, if HB3350 cannot get passed this legislative session, then the Committee should require a policy update by Oregon Department of Education to require that our children with special needs are being accommodated, to include therapies and in person instruction. The fact that our disabled children are currently not getting equal instruction is a travesty. We simply cannot wait.

Thank you for your time.

Brittany Ruiz