

Summary of Testimony for March 22, 2013

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HB 2150 Modifies contents of and process for proposal to establish public charter school.

This bill brings some specificity to the charter school application process and the requirements for a charter school. I feel this is a reasonable and a minor improvement.

HB 3093 Allows sponsor of public charter school to terminate charter for failure of school to have audit prepared or failure of public charter school to forward other information to sponsor.

This bill gives some hooks for non-compliance of a clear and generally accepted requirement. I think this is ok.

HB 2153 Allows school district board to place limitations on proposals for public charter schools that board will evaluate if specified percentage of students of school district are enrolled in public charter schools.

I don't support this bill. These types of limitations make starting charter schools very difficult. The language for termination should be moved to that part of the law.

In places where there is bi partisan support for charter schools the types of reforms being tried in Oregon have already been tried and failed. Taking charter schools off the table by restricting them now will make the use of charter schools as a reform tool to difficult to use in the future.

If the current centralization approach fails, a decentralized approach may be of use.

Putting termination language in the application process requirements is confusing and should be moved.

HB 2875 Provides that expiring charter remains in effect for public charter school until new charter is negotiated following approval of renewal of charter.

The idea for this bill came from the situation between Philomath School District and the Kings Valley Charter School (KVCS). During our last charter negotiations, the district approved the renewal but the negotiations of the terms of the charter were very difficult. Both the District and the charter school were forced to meet a time line that made a peaceful resolution difficult because discussions were rushed.

The District was very busy with a construction project, negotiating a teacher contract and dealing with budget cuts. The charter school negotiation came at a bad time. The time was running out and things got tense.

HB 2879 Allows public charter school to change sponsorship if charter is terminated.

The idea for this bill came from the situation between Philomath School District and the Kings Valley Charter School (KVCS). The District was very busy with a construction project, negotiating a teacher contract and dealing with budget cuts. The charter school was a distraction to the district from more important issues.

The district asked multiple times if the State Board of Education could sponsor the KVCS. This is not an option for an existing charter school.

Allowing other district sponsors would allow better partnerships with school districts. The adoption of charter school innovations would be accelerated with mutually beneficial partnerships. For example, KVCS does not have very much in common with the Philomath School District due to size and location in the city. The KVCS has found strong partners in surrounding rural school districts that formed more naturally. For example, the Alsea School District and KVCS have started to collaborate on common preschool metrics, student recruitment and bus service. The Falls City School District and the KVCS are collaborating for sports programs, school recruitment, and educational models.

Allowing other district sponsors would create an element of competition that would benefit strong charter schools. The successful charter school may be in demand and be rewarded with a stronger contract with a district.

The down side to this concept is a district may have a charter school within the boundaries that is not under the districts control. The bill does have some protections for districts including:

- Section 2 (4)(a) of this bill that allows a district to reject an application without appeal.
- Section 4 (5) requires mutual agreement to terminate a charter.
- Section 4(8) requires 180 notice to the district.