

Members of the House Revenue Committee,

I am the father and learning coach for 5 students at Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA), in grades 1, 4, 7, 10 and 12. We live in Independence, but attend school online! I am writing in opposition to HB 2457.

As you know, HB 2457 proposes to reduce funding via the ADMw funding formula only for students enrolled in virtual public charter schools like ORCA. Although the reduction is not yet specified, ANY reduction would be highly detrimental to our school. This is no doubt the reason for the proposal.

A study completed in 2010 by the State Board of Education, "Online Learning," stated that their best estimate for an "appropriate" level of funding would be 70% of what traditional district total costs are for bricks-and-mortar schools. Many suggest that the per-student cost for public education in Oregon is higher than \$10,000 per year; thus the SBE recommendation would suggest funding of at least \$7,000 to be "appropriate." However, virtual public charter schools currently only receive ADMw funding which is closer to \$6,000. Thus, students in the school my children attend are ALREADY underfunded, according to the State Board of Education.

Targeting virtual public charter schools with this sort of special funding reduction would somehow suggest that this education model is lower-class? Inadequate compared to older, "traditional" methods? State testing proves otherwise; ORCA students score as well or better than their "traditional" model counterparts in almost every subject and grade level. My kids and thousands like them thrive in this education environment. Many have fled situations that compromised their opportunities, and are able now to succeed. Is online education right for everyone? Of course not. Just like "traditional" methods don't work for everyone, either. That doesn't mean one method is better or more deserving than another of our support as a state. Wherever kids thrive, we should be celebrating and supporting them.

Please vote NO on this bill. Instead, choose to celebrate the success of a model that is working well for thousands of students across the state. Rather than creating a lower-tier resource level via HB 2457, show that you support ALL of Oregon's students equally.

Thanks,
PRESTON BAXTER

Be good. If you can't be good, be careful. If you can't even do that, at least stay out of jail.

(Grandma Pat Baxter, 1913-2007)