



Testimony in support of House Bill 3499

By Maria Delgado

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Members of House Education Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Maria Delgado. I am here today as a mother of 2 children, community leader and member of stand. I belong to a group of parent leaders of Stand for Children and as parents, we are very concerned about the children that do not reach their academic and language goals while in ELL programs.

Thank you, state leaders, for paying attention to this important issue and wanting to find solutions so that these children too have the same opportunities as others to reach their highest academic potential.

As I said, I have two children. My daughter is a freshmen and my son is a junior in high school. My dream is for my children to graduate from high school so that they have a better future because I did not have the same academic opportunities. The same dream that I have for my children is the same dream many parents have

We live in East Multnomah County AND I am here today in support of House Bill 3499.

The reason why I and my colleagues are supporting this proposal is because we have personal experiences with the ELL program with our own children. I would like to share my experience with my daughter, who is in the 9th grade. She was in ELL her entire school career until two months ago when I pulled her out of the program. I did this because she was not taking classes that were putting her on track to graduate or go to college. My daughter was taking too many electives, including 2 ELL classes and very few core classes.

I believe that many times students are forgotten in the system and are not exposed to other classes. Sometimes they are taken out of regular classes to provide ELL and lose academic classes when that is not necessary. This is not something that is just happening today, we know of many stories of students who were in the program in the 90s and yet today is the same story with other students, like mine.

When I talked to the principal and told him I was going to take my daughter out of the program, he replied that my daughter needed the program. A few days later, I went to talk to the principal again and told him the same thing. His response was "we have already talked about this and she needs it," I told him I did not believe it, and he insisted I leave her in the program. So I asked him to sign a document where he assured me that my daughter was going to graduate from high school and was going to go to college while in the ELL program. Then his response was: "you can remove your daughter from the program whenever you'd like" and that's when I chose to opt her out of services.

I am not against the program, ELL, in fact, it is a very good program and can be even better if you actually ensure me that these children are progressing and are exiting from ELL services in a timely manner. We need high quality programs that ensure children aren't wasting time. And districts need and more support to help students move in and out of ELL successfully. I think all teachers want the best for all children and I think this is the time to make a difference together.

Thanks for your time because we also recognize that it is not easy to make these decisions, but SI SE PUEDE! I know you are thinking of the more than 55,000 children in Oregon that are receiving ELL services and know YOU will do everything possible to improve the situation for them and all children in public schools!

Thank you.

Maria Delgado