Subject: Re: Please do pass SB 819 and SB 820
Reply-To: <<u>kirbyandkirby@gmail.com</u>>

Chair Roblan & Committee,

Tomorrow SB 819 and SB 820 will be before the Senate Committee on Education and I urge you to please pass these two critical measures. Public charter schools are a vital source of energy and experimentation in public education. As a parent of two students of Southwest Charter School in Portland I have seen first-hand the difference innovation and creativity can make in a young person's instruction and development. I have seen troubled students triumph and underachievers blossom in the focused, caring and creative environment of SWCS. Southwest's unique place-based curriculum introduces a civic-minded approach to young students' studies and, I believe, truly prepares the next generation of engaged citizens and future leaders of our community.

I currently serve as a board member at the school, and I am constantly amazed by what our dedicated teachers and staff achieve with 42% ($5,000) less per student than district schools (see the Chalkboard Project). Charter schools are creating crucial educational laboratories to drive growth and innovation in public education, and our school consistently outperforms our fully-funded peers in PPS. Imagine what could be accomplished on a level playing field. Equitably funding charters ensures that they can continue to meet the charge to innovate and succeed. SB 819 requires no new revenue, and keeps faith with the taxpayers in ensuring public school funding is spent on the students for which it intended.

Charter schools are public schools, so access to them by all of our citizenry is crucial; SB 820 would give our school the ability to ensure that we are serving *all* of our community and providing students a truly diverse education community. I urge you to please pass SB 819 and SB 820 tomorrow.

I very much appreciate your careful consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,
Josh Kirby
Secretary, Board of Directors, Southwest Charter School
Portland, OR