

WHY CHARTER SCHOOLS NEED MORE EQUITABLE FUNDING

Chair Roblan, Members of the Committee, my name is Macy June Cavener, and I am a 5th-grader at Trillium Public Charter School in Portland, Oregon.

Public charter schools get only 58% of the funding that a regular public school gets. Hey, we are a public school too! We're part of the school district! In fact, we get so little funding, that we do not have a library in the school building! We also have just one room as the cafeteria, gym, auditorium, meeting room, and pick-up-after-school room. One of the closets is in that room. We have very limited closet space in our school.

Charter schools were created to try new educational ideas and to innovate, but it is extremely hard to be successful at that when we only get about \$5,800 per student, whereas a neighborhood school gets about \$10,000 per student.

Every single elementary school teacher left last year because we couldn't pay them the same salaries as the neighborhood schools in the Portland Public School District. That is another reason why it is hard to live up to our charter school goals: our staff is constantly leaving. And being fully funded would not only allow us to pay our teachers a higher salary, but would also allow us to support them better. We could also use more funding to patch up the gaps in our walls so that we are not constantly disturbed by screaming kindergarteners. You see, our school used to be a firehouse, so each big, concrete-floored room was divided into two classrooms with really thin, weird, gappy walls. With more funding, we could also go on more field trips.

Finally, the reason that I go to my school is because it is highly democratic. We do not have to follow a standard curriculum. The kids get a say in what happens and what they learn. I am used to being able to do that; to just see something I want to change or that seems unfair, create a proposal to change or solve it, get peer feedback on the proposal, present the proposal, ask for comments, questions and amendments, and have everyone vote on the proposal out of these three categories: in favor, opposed or abstained. We vote on things, **JUST LIKE HOW YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO DISCUSS AND VOTE ON THIS BILL.**

So, basically, please be in favor of this bill! We have the right to learn, too.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

