

Senate Bills 819 and 820

Alyssa Heikes - Testimony

Senate Education Committee: April 7, 2015

Good afternoon, Chair Roblan and members of the committee.

My name is Alyssa Heikes.

I am a 5th grade student at the Ivy School, a public charter school in Northeast Portland. Every public charter school has a different educational model; mine is Montessori.

It's a perfect school for me because:

I have the freedom to choose where I sit, choose what works I can do, and how fast or slow I do them. I get to have two to three hour work cycles every day to focus on one thing for a long time. I get to do lots of projects, and I can choose what projects to do. One of my recent projects was on the Chinook Tribe. I researched their basic lifestyle, built a diorama and made a presentation to my class. My Grandpa brought his huge collection of Native American tools and shared them with my whole class - we got to hold beaver heads, arrows, spears, and learn how the Native Americans throughout the Pacific Northwest used them.

We learn all our academics, plus we learn about how to have a peaceful world. We have mediations to solve conflicts and safe places if we need to calm down. I wish all the people in the world knew how to participate in effective mediation and calm down.

I like Senate Bill 819 and I hope you do, too. The reason I think kids in charter schools should get the same amount of money as kids in district schools is that we are worth the same! And charter schools are public schools. We are all just kids trying to learn what we need to know to have a good life and make this world a better place for everyone.

Our school has a hard time finding the money to pay many basic things like counselors, instructional materials, PE, music, and lunch.

Also our school can't afford some basic classroom materials like pencils, and paper, so our parents are constantly asked to donate things. My family can usually afford to do this, but some can't, and Ivy doesn't have enough money to backfill...any kid should be able to go to any public school and not feel bad about whether they can pay for anything.

I don't understand why the law short-changes kids in charter schools. Fairness is SUPER important to kids. I really hope you will change the law! Please vote YES for Senate Bill 819.

Also, please vote yes for Senate Bill 820. It will allow my school to bring low-income and other disadvantaged kids into Montessori Other charter schools want to serve more diverse kids, and need Senate Bill 820 to help them do that.

Thank you.