

Subject: SB 819 & SB 820 In Favor

Dear Chair Roblan and Senators Knopp, Baertschiger, Beyer, Gelser, Hass, and Kruse,

As members of the Senate Education Committee, I am writing today to ask for your support for SB 819 and 820 to provide equitable funding for public charter schools (SB819) and to allow charters to give priority to historically underserved student groups (SB 820).

We are longtime residents of inner NE Portland and parents of students (current and former) at Trillium Public Charter School, located in N Portland. Our family has been involved with Trillium Charter School since 2005, including serving on the board, fundraising, volunteering in the classroom, and more, and we have seen first hand the inequity that has resulted from the State's current funding formula for charters. Many of Trillium's families are low or moderate income which makes fundraising an ongoing challenge, with many volunteers working hard to close the funding gap! Stable funding is critical in order for charters to provide facilities that enhance, rather than detract, from learning and to attract and retain high quality teachers and administrative staff.

As you know, public charter schools in Oregon do not receive the same amount of funds per student as district-run schools. However, charters are required to meet all State standards, provide facilities and special services, and, of most importantly, a high quality education for Oregon's youth with an innovative educational approach. With fewer financial resources, it is more challenging for charters to serve all their students and maintain a strong and supportive learning environment.

SB 820 would go a long way to increasing the ethnic and racial diversity at charter schools, further expanding the reach of the charter's innovative educational offerings. Additionally, I would love to see Trillium better reflect the community in which we live and where the school is located, and for all charters to better reflect the communities they serve.

Please support these bills to help make our public charter schools the best and most diverse places of learning they can be!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Millhauser and Christian Nielsen

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