

**Margaret Doherty**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 35**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

February 28, 2017

Senator Mark Hass, Chair  
Finance & Revenue Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Hass and Members of the Committee,

As a former educator and now as State Representative, I have always been a strong advocate to ensure that Oregon's most valuable asset, our children, are equipped with best future possible. Senate Bill 123 is a valuable tool in helping local communities to be able to best serve our kids, and I urge your support of this important legislation.

At the core, this legislation empowers local communities, through a local election process, to establish a special district tax base to support the education of the children in their community. Given continued limited state funding, this bill would empower communities to locally enact and fund programs that address rising child poverty, and provide additional academic programs and social supports that can help move the dial on important metrics like graduation rates and academic success.

Perhaps most important is the ability for a newly created special district to develop and fund programs to support early learning for children who haven't entered the K-12 education system. Arriving fully prepared for Kindergarten helps to set students on an education pathway for success. This legislation would allow local communities to focus on specific educational programming that could engage children and families early during a vital time in a child's development, which is an important indicator for academic success. It is also important to take into consideration the important role a special district focused more broadly on children could have on serving vulnerable and underrepresented youth. In many cases, Summer break and other academic breaks have disparate impacts on academic outcomes for underrepresented student populations who may not be able to take part in continued learning programs; however, with a special tax district, local communities, through a vote of the people, could provide this important and vital resource for their children.

I hope you will join me in supporting this important legislation and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Doherty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Margaret Doherty  
State Representative  
House District 35 (Tigard and Southwest Portland)