

Greetings members of the Senate Committee On Education,

When my Kindergartner was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in 2015, I had no idea that school nurses would become a critical lifeline. You see, without school nurses, my child could literally not attend school. He needs insulin injections and measured carbohydrates to in order to survive, and the treatment plan from his pediatric endocrinologist must be adhered to under the direction of an RN. I live in a rural county in Oregon where two superhero school nurses divide their time amongst six schools. Each of those schools have *at least* one child with Type 1 Diabetes on their long list of acute and chronic illnesses that desperately need their time and attention. They write health plans that keep my son and countless other children protected, healthy, learning, and thriving at school. They train and support school aids, develop meaningful relationships with every child and family, educate teachers and staff, and advocate at every level to give children with special health needs a voice and equal access to education. I see them do this and yet still experience a level of commitment and engagement that makes me feel like I am the only mother on their caseload. It is not overly dramatic to say that they are saving lives every day and creating an impact that will last a lifetime. In some cases, they may be the only medical professional with regular access to a child, and in many others, are the sole person fostering the skill sets these children will need to care for their own health when they leave the public school system.

Year after year, our school nurses are asked to do more with less and stretch their resources to a breaking point. They are forced to triage situations that with adequate funding would have equal priority. Oregon is a progressive state known for investing our precious dollars where they count, yet our school nurses are being left behind. I can only assume this is because the Senate Committee on Education has not had the extreme privilege of seeing them in action, and standing in awe of the workload they balance and the heart and soul that pours into our youth and education system.

I implore you to fully fund their critical work. Shadow one for a day. Meet a child whose life they have changed. Listen to a parent who can't do it alone. Allocating funds for healthy children who can stay safe at school is quite simply the right thing to do.

Respectfully submitted,

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