

Graham Garner  
Student of Occupational Therapy at Pacific University  
In Support of HB 3263

April 2, 2017

To: Chair Representative Margaret Doherty and members of the House Committee on Education

Hello, my name is Graham Garner, I am an Occupational Therapy Student at Pacific University. I'm here today to speak to you in regards to HB 3263, regarding workloads for occupational therapists in the school setting. I want to thank the committee for taking the issue of into your consideration. I know your time is valuable, I believe this issue is of value as well.

When I chose to pursue a career in occupational therapy, my motivation did not come from a desire to become rich. While occupational therapy programs are similar in cost to many other medical professional degrees, our salaries tend to be more modest. In my experience, the vast majority of my colleagues as both students and working providers tend enter this field because they believe it is their best opportunity to provide a meaningful service to others.

Currently, the opportunity to do this in Oregon schools is extremely limited. This is a well-known fact within the occupational community, and very much affects the decisions of well-meaning students and professionals alike. While occupational therapy is a broad degree, we do choose to tailor our expertise depending on what area we want to practice in. I can tell you that my choice to work with older populations was in part due to my perception of the futility of trying to make a difference in schools with the current enormous caseload sizes.

I am by no means alone in this decision. I know many of my classmates that have either made career decisions to steer away from pediatrics entirely, or who plan to practice in other states school systems.

I would like to add, that as I will probably not practice in school systems, this bill will probably not affect me professionally. However, I do plan on raising a family in Oregon, and I do want to add my voice as a future father in support of this bill. I know that Occupational Therapy can make monumental differences in the success not only of the children struggling in the classroom, but for all students who interact with those children everyday as well. I think we all know the ability of one child in a classroom to affect the learning of the children they are surrounded by.

So, I am here today, to urge you to support HB 3263, and provide Oregon children with the same level of support that other states provide.

Thank you for your time,  
Graham Garner  
Occupational Therapy Student