

Testimony for information session 6/13/17 Subject: SB 437
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Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education.

I am a resident of Portland, Oregon and a member of Parents Across America Oregon and Oregon Save our Schools. This testimony is in opposition to SB 437, a bill that has been euphemistically entitled Education Savings Accounts. This bill is school voucher legislation pure and simple. Its effect to will be to enhance opportunities for the wealthy at the expense of poor students. It will also rob funding from the education fund and weaken public school districts.

SB 347 appears to be unconstitutional on its face. I will not go into the particulars of that claim here, but would be glad to happy to address them in court should the state proceed with this inequitable form of education funding. Oregon has the responsibility to provide all children with a quality education.

I am also confused by the process by which SB 347 has received consideration at this late date in the legislative process. It would appear that some bills are given preferential treatment if they are backed by supporters with billions of dollars. The Cascade Policy Institute, the Goldwater Institute, and Institute for Justice are three libertarian, neoconservative organizations that have no business in drafting Oregon education policy and legislation. This process of an “informational” session is highly suspect. I would appreciate knowing the process by which a bill gets this special consideration because I’ve heard that this isn’t technically a hearing. Still, it has the same impact on parents and educators as a hearing. We must organize and protest it just the same. That’s not right. I truly would like to see, in writing, the process that has caused me to have to write this letter today. This is infuriating. Oregonians have a right to know the loopholes.

Deb Mayer