

June 13, 2017

Dear Legislators,

First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is Anna Maria and I am from Mount Angel, OR. I am currently finishing up my sophomore year of high school. I'm writing to you today to address the issues of school choice, particularly that of the Education Opportunity Act (Bill 437). I have been home schooling for three years now, and previously attended a private school for eight years.

Throughout my life, the education choices that my parents made for me were based on the conviction that those choices were what would be best for me. I must say that I agree with them. I was and, still am, extremely grateful for their decision to send me to a private school, and then to continue my education at home. I have been privileged with a top-notch education that has given me a running start towards my future.

My education, however, has taken a substantial toll on some areas of our life. My parents, for instance, have had to forego purchasing health insurance in order to send me to a private school and, later, to enroll me in online courses and purchase educational materials for home schooling. Although home schooling hasn't been as financially demanding as a private school, it still has its own price tag that can be surprisingly high. In addition to purchasing online classes and curriculum for me, my parents wanted to be able to pay for extra-curricular classes such as violin and art, but we simply did not have the money to do so. I had been taking violin lessons

for several years and got to play in the Salem Youth Symphony, but had to stop because there just weren't any funds for it.

I'm aware of many families in the state of Oregon in very similar situations to ours. These are families who are willing to make immense sacrifices to be able to give their children what they believe is the best education they can give them, one that is custom fitted to each child's needs and interests. Many of these people are personal friends of mine. Seeing what they go through, and what my parents have to do, it's obvious to me that there has to be a better way. Families shouldn't have to scrimp on their food budget for one of the most fundamental rights each and every person has — the right to learn.

When I heard about the Education Savings Account (ESA), I thought it was too good to be true. But upon further research, I discovered that it was, in fact, doable for Oregon, and has already been positively impacting hundreds of thousands of students and their families in Arizona, and other states.

I believe that the ESA is the perfect solution for families who need help to provide a better education for their children. Whatever you can do to support the Education Opportunity Act (SB 437) will go a long way towards providing a brighter future for numerous students and their families, and a brighter future for Oregon.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Maria Garcia Cobb

