

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Chairs Monroe and Smith Warner and Committee Members

I STRONGLY OPPOSE SB 187, which establishes the Vision Health Account and directs Department of Education to reimburse education provider for expenses incurred from providing vision screenings.

I fully understand the importance of screening for vision. My granddaughter didn't discover her vision problem until she was a sophomore even after numerous vision screenings. It was only through her only query that she discovered others could see what was written on the blackboard and she couldn't. Student's awareness is a big part of discovery, and teacher's observations.

I support Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation's program providing free vision screenings to students. Oregon currently has the largest volunteer screening program in the country with fast accurate technology. But, as they testified, the new technology has reduced costs to \$3.20 per student. That amount is well within a fund raiser for schools.

The state has no responsibility of taking over volunteer work that is successful. The state should provide incentives to expand the volunteer program to cover the 246 school not being serviced by the volunteer program instead of spending \$3 million to make it a state administered program with funding the state doesn't have.

To support the volunteer program is to vote No on this bill. Give local schools a chance to be innovative in fund raising or other sources before the state steps in and destroys their opportunities.

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