

February 13, 2017 ~ Iris Maria Chávez
House Education Committee
Testimony on HB 2554

Thank you, Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Iris Maria Chavez and I am working with a coalition of community based charter schools from across Oregon. I am here to testify on House Bill 2554, which would require public charter schools to comply with public school requirements related to federal school meals programs.

Community based charter schools are very much aware that childhood hunger, and poverty, can have a negative impact on the ability of students to learn. That one in four Oregon children lives in a household that experiences hunger or is at risk of hunger is a problem we all, as advocates for children, must address.

Many of our community based charter schools were started by advocates who want to address whole child issues, to innovate in curriculum and other programming, and give students a high quality public school option. Charter schools in Oregon were authorized with the understanding that they'd operate with flexibility from various state requirements, in particular, those that create the most burden to providing a high quality public school option.

I am excited to tell you that over 70% of Oregon's community based charter schools already participate in the federal school meals programs. And, in addition to that, many more have created their own school meals program and honor the federal eligibility standards.

We are pleased to be able to work with Rep. Hack, and members of the House Education Committee, to ensure that House Bill 2554 is crafted in a manner that takes into account the administrative burden, cost and other unique circumstances many of our schools face.

Oregon's community based charter schools look forward to working together on House Bill 2554.