

To Chair Gelser and members of the Senate Committee On Human Services,

My name is Jennifer Knapp and I am writing in support of SB 262. I am the mother of a child with a chronic health condition called adrenal insufficiency. I have also worked as a special education teacher in Oregon.

My daughter's condition caused many emotional and physical problems that affected her ability to succeed in school. As a special education teacher I was fully aware of my rights to advocate for my daughter.

However, as a current employee working at the school my daughter attended I found myself in a very uncomfortable position with my school principal and school psychiatrist. The school psychiatrist refused to test my daughter for special education. In January my daughter's psychiatrist sent a letter to the school which included information on my daughter's diagnosis and a direct request to the school to help meet her needs in any way they could.

Even then the school refused to test her. In the end, the only way I was able to get the school to help was to write a letter to the head of our districts' special education department.

Towards the end of the school year in May **More than 5 MONTHS after I'd asked for testing** the district finally tested my daughter and decided she qualified for 504 plan. Due to the delay in testing and implementation of needed services my daughter missed months of instruction and much needed social interaction with her peers.

Since the end of the school year was just a few weeks away I was assured a meeting would take place before her 6th grade year to assure the 504 plan would be in place. However, the promised 504 was never implemented and my daughter struggled in her 6th grade year.

After an extended hospital stay for her depression and anxiety I transferred her to a different middle school within the district. The new school immediately put my daughter on an IEP and worked to help make school a safe and welcoming place. Sadly for daughter her prior school experiences were too much to overcome and residential treatment was necessary.

Sadly, in the many months it took to get the elementary school and first middle school to act my daughter had already descended into the deep hole of depression which took several years to overcome. My daughter's childhood was taken by her depression and anxiety, she had to be away from home for 19 months. Today as a 21 year old she is doing much better, but school was such a trauma for her that to this day she has not been able to overcome her anxieties to attend college. While it's too late to make a difference for my daughter there is some solace in the idea that my testimony can prevent this for future students.

Please pass SB 262. Students should be tested and served quickly so their chance of success is not hindered.

Jennifer Knapp