

June 22, 2020

Co-Chairs Courtney, Kotek, Girod and Drazan and Members of the Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm testifying today in support of LC 76.

My name is Debbie Thibodeaux. I live in Portland, and I have three children who are currently enrolled in online public school. I'm testifying today to urge you to support permanently, rather than temporarily, increasing the cap on enrollment in online schools.

When our oldest daughter was ready to go to school twelve years ago, we looked into school options in our area. We discovered online public education and saw that it was a good blend of our daughter being able to learn at her own pace at home, while also providing the structure of consistent accountability with state-certified public school teachers. Once we experienced huge success with our oldest, we chose to enroll our younger two children in an online public school, as well. And although all three have different learning styles and strengths, it has been a great fit for all three.

Families choose an online public school for any number of reasons: an immune compromised child, an Olympic-hopeful athlete in training, respite for a bullied student, one-on-one teaching environment for a gifted or struggling child. The list goes on, and that is precisely why online public education is such a valuable option for families who need an alternative to the traditional classroom setting. We have been so grateful to have access to great online public schools in Oregon that are working well for our students. I am thankful to have the option to choose what is best for my children.

Now, as we are navigating a new and shifting educational landscape in the midst of this pandemic, we owe it to our families to provide the best educational options possible for EACH CHILD. More Oregon families will need choices in education in this time of stress and anxiety. I urge you to PERMANENTLY increase the enrollment cap on online public schools so that more families have access to this critical school option moving forward.

Thank you.

Debbie Thibodeaux
Portland