

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 23, 2019

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Roberta Dunn, FACT Oregon

RE: Support for HJM 3A

Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Heard, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Roberta Dunn, and I am the Executive Director of FACT Oregon. FACT Oregon's mission is to empower Oregon families experiencing disability in pursuit of whole lives in their community. We do this with focused work in three interconnected areas: *expanding awareness, growing community, and equipping families.*

Through services created "by families for families," we have helped thousands of families each year navigate barriers, create a culture of inclusion, and demonstrate that a whole life is possible. The outcome of our work is engaged families with high expectations for their child and a vision for the future where all communities, including their school communities, are accessible, welcoming, and embrace that disability is natural.

Our work with Oregon families has given us the opportunity to see first-hand the challenges Oregon school districts have in fully meeting the needs of all students experiencing disabilities and in meeting their responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (to provide students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment) when they do not have adequate resources.

Despite a promise made over 40 years ago when it enacted IDEA, the Federal government has never fully funded the "40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure" it promised to states to help offset the cost of educating eligible special education students.

In fact, according to the National Council on Disability, the Federal government currently pays *less than half* of what it originally promised in 1975, or roughly 18 percent of the total cost to educate a child with disabilities.¹

We support HJM 3A and your leadership on this critically important issue. Thank you for your efforts to urge Congress to finally fulfill its promise to fully fund the IDEA.

Roberta Dunn
Executive Director
FACT Oregon

¹ National Council on Disability, "IDEA Series – Broken Promises: The Underfunding of IDEA," issued February 7, 2018, and available at https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_BrokenPromises_508.pdf .