

Submitter: Danielle Miles  
On Behalf Of: My child at Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter Sch  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB767

My child endured brutal physical bullying while attending our neighborhood school for years. He is gay. I did everything in my power to protect him- met numerous times with his teacher, school counselors, Principal, and after-school SUN Manager. He was coming home with marks all over his body and expressing thoughts of suicide. I finally made the choice to send him to a Charter school. Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School has become a defacto safe space for LGBTQ- particularly Gender Expansive- and Neurodivergent youth. This school has saved my child's life. He is a happy and confident pre-teen today and is thriving at school.

I am a public school teacher and believe in public education with my entire being. I have put more blood, sweat and tears into our Public Education system than most people will ever know. And yet I still know and see every day that large public schools cannot meet every child's needs. There have to be options for these students who are so at risk.

If this bill passes, a community 14 years in the making that primarily serves Queer and Neurdivergent children will be forced to close. The Gresham-Barlow School District has terminated our school's lease, forcing us to find an alternative building in a short time frame. The new building will be less than 1000 feet outside of GBSD boundaries.

This school began as a dream of a few parents who wanted to bring Montessori Education to people who could benefit from the philosophy but could not afford a private school education. It truly is a home grown, grassroots community project. Please consider our community when you vote on this bill.