

Submitter: Jennifer Neal
On Behalf Of: 3444 Redmond proficiency Academy
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

I am writing to express my strong support for Oregon House Bill 3444, which seeks to enhance funding for charter schools across the state. As a parent of a student at Redmond Proficiency Academy, a charter school in Redmond, Oregon, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that charter schools can have on students who struggle in traditional public school settings.

My son, like many other students in Oregon, faced significant challenges in maintaining passing grades and building positive social connections within the traditional public school system. These struggles not only impacted his academic performance but also his confidence and sense of belonging. Since enrolling at Redmond Proficiency Academy, however, his educational journey has taken a remarkable turn. He is now excelling in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, preparing enthusiastically for college, and has developed a strong sense of community among his peers. Beyond academics, he has joined a sports team, which not only boosted his self-esteem but also led to his first job, teaching him valuable life skills and responsibility. Additionally, his participation in robotics competitions—opportunities often provided through charter schools—has opened doors to potential scholarships and fostered a passion for innovation and teamwork.

Charter schools like Redmond Proficiency Academy are vital to Oregon's education ecosystem because they offer tailored learning environments that meet the diverse needs of students. According to the Oregon Department of Education, charter schools serve over 40,000 students statewide, many of whom benefit from innovative curricula and specialized programs not always available in traditional public schools. These schools often achieve higher graduation rates for at-risk students and provide pathways to college and career readiness, as evidenced by my son's experience. Furthermore, research from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools indicates that charter schools in Oregon have been particularly effective in closing achievement gaps for underserved populations, including low-income students and students of color.

Funding through HB 3444 would ensure that charter schools can continue to offer these critical opportunities, such as advanced coursework, extracurricular activities, and career-focused programs like robotics, which prepare students for success in a competitive global economy. Increased funding would also allow charter schools to expand their capacity, hire highly qualified educators, and invest in cutting-edge resources, all of which directly benefit Oregon's students and communities.

I urge you to support HB 3444 to strengthen Oregon's commitment to educational equity and innovation. By investing in charter schools, we can provide more students with the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and professionally, ultimately building a brighter future for our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to provide additional information or testimony to support this critical legislation.