

Submitter: Tate W
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444
House Committee On Education
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

As an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep injustice currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are effectively funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Students at Ridgeline Montessori Charter School are public school students, and it's past time to fund our education fairly.

Each student here at Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School has a story about why this school has made a positive difference in their life. Many started out in traditional public schools, but couldn't receive the education they deserved, often due to learning challenges that required specialized attention beyond what a public school classroom could provide, or physical, developmental, or mental health challenges that public schools simply couldn't, or wouldn't, accommodate.

My personal connection to the charter school system is with Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School. Though I doubt you personally experienced a Montessori education, I believe there are aspects of it you could relate to. Within a Montessori space, there is a tight-knit community where students can thrive and grow together. Many people with a strictly Montessori education disvalue this until it is lost or taken away. The educators here at Ridgeline are driven to helping the students grow and continue through struggles and failures, a key part of giving young minds resilience and self-sustaining habits. Within this system, students are given a choice on what to work on from a list of given assignments. They are provided with a goal and due date for multiple different items at a given time and are trusted to complete them. This is proven to encourage concentration and individuality. I have benefited from all these aspects of Montessori throughout the three-odd years I've been a student at Ridgeline.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. This directly impacts me as a student. Many buildings are old and in need of upgrades, students can't access transportation

services, food security programs are limited, and schools lack essential school supplies and mental health resources. By passing HB 3444, you can fix this ongoing disparity and provide fair funding for public charter school students who deeply need it.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Sincerely, Tate