

Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Brie Rogers, and I am a school board member and a parent of three children attending Powell Butte Community Charter School, serving over 200 K-8 students, in rural Powell Butte Oregon. I urge you to support House Bill 3444 because right now, our public charter schools are being shortchanged.

At my children's school, the funding gap is impossible to ignore. Our middle schoolers use furniture that is literally falling apart; being replaced only thanks to PTO fundraised dollars. Our elementary classrooms lack safe, appropriately sized desks and chairs. Our school building itself is in constant need of repairs—sporting a 100+-year-old furnace that frequently fails, a septic system prone to basement flooding, leaking windows and roofs, and more. As a school board member, my experience working with funding disparities has put the board in tricky positions; asking us to balance decisions about providing up-to-date technology, curriculums, and enriching opportunities for students- while also trying to properly care for our extremely valuable and talented staff.

Meanwhile, our teachers—who provide hands-on, place-based education that fosters environmental and community stewardship—are expected to do more with less. They receive just \$250 per year to supply their classrooms, barely enough to cover basics like books and markers, let alone materials that bring learning to life. Recruiting and retaining passionate educators is a challenge when neighboring district schools can offer more competitive salaries and benefits. Not only do our students deserve equitable funding in their school experiences - our teachers do, too. Despite these obstacles, our students commonly academically outperform many of our regional

surrounding district schools, yet are expected to achieve academic success in an environment plagued by financial inequity.

This is not sustainable, nor is it just.

Since I wasn't able to speak during the hearing, I'd like to address the comment made regarding teacher licensure. Expecting charter schools to increase licensed teachers without equitable funding is unrealistic when we already compete with underfunding compared to district schools. While most of our teachers are licensed, those who are not still bring immense value through specialized, place-based learning that intentionally differs from traditional district models. Our educators are innovative, producing students who not only meet, but often exceed state benchmarks. Regardless of licensing rates, our school fully complies with Oregon's curricular and educational standards and laws- thus comparing licensure status is, overall, a moot point.

So, what's the best part of this situation? We can fix this **without** raising new revenue. No new taxes, bonds, or asks of Oregonians to further open their wallets. HB 3444 simply ensures a fairer distribution of already existing funds.

I respectfully urge you to vote yes on HB 3444 and make educational equity a reality.

Thank you.