

Submitter: Kirsten Gestvang
On Behalf Of: Bend International School
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

Testimony in Support of HB 3444

Good evening Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kirsten Gestvang and I am a dedicated parent of a student at a public charter school in Oregon. When selecting a school for my child, I was drawn to the distinctive and innovative learning opportunities that charter schools offer. However, I am deeply concerned about the significant funding disparity that exists between public charter schools and district-run schools in our state.

Currently, students in public charter schools receive just 48% of the funding that their peers in district-run schools receive. This stark difference in funding is a major obstacle to providing all students with equal access to quality education, regardless of the type of public school they attend.

The charter school legislation in Oregon, which was once pioneering, has become outdated and fails to reflect our state's present priorities. This outdated legislation restricts essential funding for early education, intervention programs, and investments in our historically underserved communities. By not modernizing our charter school policies, we are neglecting the educational needs of many children.

I respectfully urge you to refer HB 3444 to committee and support its passage. This bill is vital for addressing the funding inequities between public charter schools and district-run schools. It will ensure that every student in Oregon receives the same level of investment in their education, regardless of the public school they attend.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Gestvang