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Subject: **Support for HB2953** with Strengthened Provisions for Highly Qualified Direct Service Providers such as Adapted Physical Education Specialist in Special Education

Dear Oregon Representatives & Senators, I am writing to express my strong support for HB2953 and to commend the efforts of Chief Sponsors Representatives Neron and Cate, Senator Jama, and Representatives Dobson and McDonald, along with Regular Sponsors Representatives Fragala and Senators Patterson and Pham, in advocating for students with disabilities. This bill is a critical step forward in ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, receive the support they need to thrive in K-12 education.

While I fully support HB2953, I strongly urge you to strengthen this important legislation by explicitly including highly qualified direct service providers, such as Adapted Physical Education (APE) specialists, in the bill's provisions for special education funding. The foundational and fundamental motor skills developed through adapted physical education are just as vital to a child's overall development as academic skills. Many students with disabilities require specialized instruction in motor skill development to access their education fully, participate in daily activities, and gain independence.

Adapted Physical Education specialists are uniquely trained to address the motor and physical development needs of students with disabilities. Their expertise ensures that students develop critical motor skills that support academic achievement, social-emotional growth, and lifelong well-being. Without direct access to qualified APE specialists, many students miss out on essential opportunities to build strength, coordination, and confidence necessary for full participation in school and community life.

By including APE specialists in HB2953, the bill will ensure that students with disabilities receive the well-rounded support they need to succeed. Additionally, the bill's provision to remove the percentage cap on the number of moneys distributed from the State School Fund to remove the percentage cap on the number of moneys distributed from the State School Fund to school districts for students eligible for special education as a child with a disability is a necessary step toward equitable funding. This change will help school districts provide the adequate range of services required to meet the diverse needs of these students.

I urge you to amend the bill to explicitly provide special education funding for these essential services and recognize the critical role of direct service providers like Adapted PE Specialist in meeting the diverse needs of our students in special education. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the success of students with disabilities. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your support in strengthening HB2953 to include the expertise of highly qualified APE direct service providers, ensuring all students receive the comprehensive support they deserve.

Sincerely,
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