

Submitter: Marc Blackstein  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

My name is Marc Blackstein, and I writing as the current board chair of Sauvie Island School (a K–8 public charter). I stand in favor of HB 3444 and am so appreciative of the many parents, staff and community members throughout the state who have spoken out in support of equitable charter funding. Our charter is the lifeblood of our remote community and I am so thankful for everything our school has done for my family.

With my testimony here, I am writing in opposition to the opposition statement made in Wednesday's session by the OEA representative regarding the structure of charter school boards. In his statement, the representative suggested that in revising charter statures, we might also wish to change the requirements which would compel small charter schools like ours to transition from an appointed board of directors to an elected board. While I agree that oversight of charter governance is important, I feel removing our ability to recruit and appoint could have very disruptive impact on our school and many Oregon charters in general.

At Sauvie Island School, we operate with limited financial and staffing resources. Because of this, our board is not a traditional policy board—it is a working board. We rely on the diverse professional expertise of our members to fill critical roles, overcome funding limitations, and advance our mission. For instance, I oversee website content and write community communications on behalf of the school. We have a board member with human resources expertise, who helped craft a creative benefits package for our staff despite being unable to achieve competitive base pay versus district schools. We have benefited from board members who specialize in place-based and experiential learning, the heart of our charter's educational philosophy. The list goes on and on.

Whereas at a district level these might be full time roles, in a charter like ours they are only part time. Still, they are also not possible to contract out as they require intimate knowledge, accountability, and investment in the day to day operations of our school.

An elected board structure would limit our ability to recruit and appoint experts in areas where we lack the capacity to hire dedicated employees. This flexibility is vital for our small school. Without it, we would struggle to maintain the high-quality educational experience that families seek from a charter program—especially one whose mission is rooted in hands-on, place-based learning. On behalf of Sauvie Island School, I respectfully ask you to preserve the authority of charter schools to

determine the governance structure that best fits our unique circumstances. This autonomy ensures that we can continue to serve our students effectively and responsibly, even with limited resources.

Best regards,  
Marc Blackstein