

Submitter: Janice Cummings  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

Dear Chair Huron and Members of the Education Committee,

I am providing testimony in support of HB 3444 and asking for your support in its passage.

In 2016, my husband and I were researching what elementary school to enroll our soon to be kindergartner twins in. There was a wonderful magnet school we entered them into the lottery, their neighborhood school (which was highly rated), a full Spanish emersion magnet school, and also a new public charter school, Bend International school. We entered the lottery for 3 schools, and our daughters got in to 2. We ultimately chose Bend International school, a public charter school, because we loved the open and welcoming environment, the bilingual aspect, the diversity of staff and students, and the project learning. My husband and I are both born first generation Americans, born to immigrant mothers, and an International school just felt right for our family. Our twin daughters are now in 8th grade and their last year at Bend International school. They have thrived in the small, nurturing environment. Their teachers throughout the years have been incredible. I think it's a testimony to the school how long the staff stay, despite being paid less than district-run schools. Our girls are preparing now for high school in the fall. They will be attending Summit High here in Bend, a public high school, and they are fully prepared academically. Their teachers are recommending they take honors level classes! Public Charter schools are free for families, and students in Oregon deserve the same investment in their education, whether attending a public charter school or public district-run school. Right now students in public charter schools receive 48% of the funding that their peers in district-run school receive.

I urge you as a constituent and as a parent to support HB 3444, have it referred to committee, and ultimately vote in support of this very necessary fix in our public education funding. My children's education is worth more than 48 cents on the dollar! Our state's initial - and now outdated - charter school legislation is not in line with our state's current priorities.

-It diverts funding for early education and intervention, with K - 8 students receiving only 80% of their intended per pupil funding.

-It diverts funding for our historically underserved communities, with less than half of the intended state weighed funds flowing through to serve those children.

-It blocks access to federal funding, which is specifically intended to serve historically underserved students. This includes no access to IDEA, Title I, and Title III.

With appreciation,  
Janice Cummings  
mom to Sylvie and Eloise Cummings, age 13  
Bend, Oregon