



Date: 2/17/25

Name: Emma Beiser, OEA Member, Lebanon Education Association

Committee: House Education Committee

Bill: HB 2953

Position: Support

Hello Representative Neron, and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Emma Beiser. I'm an Oregonian, a teacher, and a special needs mother. I'm here today to represent many voices—often overlooked, placed in corners, or even mocked. However, it is the privilege of my life to spotlight one voice for you: my daughter Hadley.

Hadley is five years old and started Kindergarten this fall. As her mother, I admit I may be biased, but I truly believe she is one of the most remarkable people I've ever known. She's kind, compassionate, fearless, and incredibly bright. She loves to jump in puddles and paint every surface of our house. Hadley was also diagnosed with level 2 autism and is primarily non-verbal. She can't tell you her name, and she can't tell you mine, or her phone number.

As a parent, there are no words to describe the fear that comes with sending your non-verbal child into the world without you. I'm trusting the adults in her life to not only keep her safe but to help her navigate the world. To guide her through the halls of her school, help her make friends with peers when her communication is so different from theirs, and to be her voice in a world that doesn't always listen.

Hadley has a lot of sensory needs and will elope when she's overstimulated or understimulated. Despite all the planning during our transition meeting and kindergarten orientation in the spring, the school district was unable to meet Hadley's needs. She was placed in a general education classroom and only received support during her mandated pull-out times from her IEP. Although her sweet kindergarten teacher tried her best, Hadley was not getting the support she so desperately needed.

Hadley was eloping over fifty times a week—an average of 13 times a day. She even managed to leave the school building and reach the parking lot before being redirected back inside. Through careful scheduling and reducing support elsewhere, we were able to secure more push-in support, allowing Hadley to receive assistance in her general education classroom.



When she has an adult with her, Hadley participates in classroom activities and rotations with her peers, knows all of her letter names and sounds, and can count successfully to 30.

As a mom, I'm incredibly happy to see my daughter thriving, but as a teacher, I'm heartbroken. I know that to keep my child safe in her classroom, other children are left without support that could help them reach their goals and make progress. Resources at her school are stretched so thin that I can see the exhaustion on the faces of her wonderful assistants—faces that help my daughter feel safe, welcome, and included. Hadley hears their names just as often as mine, because these assistants have become some of the most important people in her life.

Committee members, we must do our part to support students with disabilities in Oregon. By removing the cap on special education services, we provide ALL students with a chance to belong, a chance to be heard, and a chance to learn.