

Lisa D. Beaudoin, Director, Strategies for Disability Equity, LLC
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January 28, 2025
To the House Education Committee on Funding

RE: oppose HB 563

Dear Chairman Ladd and Committee Members,

My name is Lisa Beaudoin, Director of Strategies for Disability Equity, LLC, and I strongly urge you to oppose HB 563-FN. This bill would have serious unintended consequences for students who receive special education services by creating financial incentives for schools to place them in more restrictive settings, separating them from their peers.

Research consistently shows that students with disabilities achieve higher academic and social-emotional outcomes when fully included in general education settings with appropriate supports. Inclusive education is not only a legal requirement under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but it is also best practice—ensuring that students with disabilities have the same opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to their communities as their peers.

This bill undermines both best practices and student well-being by incentivizing more restrictive placements. Schools would receive more funding when students are placed in segregated settings and less when they are educated alongside their peers. *This contradicts IDEA's mandate that children should be educated in the least restrictive environment whenever possible.*

As a parent of a child who had an IEP, I have seen firsthand the benefits of an inclusive education. My son thrived in general education settings with appropriate supports, developing academic skills, friendships, and the social-emotional growth necessary for a fulfilling adult life. If this bill had been in place, financial incentives might have led the school to place him in a segregated setting, limiting his potential and opportunities.

Two years ago, a nearly identical bill was **unanimously rejected**, and last year, a similar proposal was referred for further study due to concerns about its impact. There is no reason to revive this harmful approach.

If funding adjustments are needed, they should be based on **the actual cost of services** rather than where a child is placed. **HB 563-FN contradicts federal law**, undermines student success, and would harm children who rely on special education supports. I strongly urge you to recommend HB 563-FN as **Inexpedient to Legislate (ITL)**.

Sincerely,

Lisa Beaudoin
Director, Strategies for Disability Equity, LLC

