



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 24, 2021

To: [Senate Committee on Education](#)
Chair, Senator Michael Dembrow
Vice-Chair, Senator Chuck Thomsen


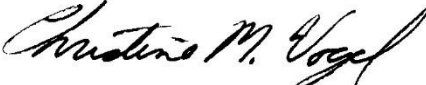

Re: [SB 236](#)– Eliminating expulsion in early childhood care and education programs– **Support**

LWVUS supports efforts to secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all, to promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans and equal rights for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. LWVUS supports greatly increased educational opportunity through compensatory programs for disadvantaged groups beginning at the preschool level and extending through secondary education. The League of Women Voters believes that the first five years of a child’s life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Additionally, the League believes quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children, with federally funded opportunities going first to children of poverty and/or with special needs. LWV is fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. LWVOR supports early screening (physical, dental, mental, and behavioral) for all children; early prenatal care and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental); and comprehensive services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities.

Behavioral issues are frequently the result of adverse childhood experiences or family systems stressed beyond coping. Rather than expulsion in early childhood care and education programs, these behaviors should be seen as a loud cry for help from a young child who may not have verbal or coping skills to do much more than “act out” asking for safety and security. Early childhood educators are in a position to observe and assist young children in need.

You may know that the [House Committee On Behavioral Health](#) is hearing [HB 2381](#) that would modify laws relating to youth suicide intervention and prevention to include children under 10 years of age. While it is sobering to know early childhood suicide rates are rising sharply, it is important to identify earlier points of intervention. The elements of [SB 236](#) addressing childhood educator skills enhancement and training, as well as infant-toddler early childhood mental health consultation, will help save lives and enhance quality of life. National data shows that Black children, Native children, and children who experience disabilities are asked to leave at disproportionately higher rates than other children. These are the same cohorts that often have difficulty staying in school and graduating. Early identification and early intervention are critical, not expulsion.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

		
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