



Marion County
OREGON

Children and Families Department

February 8, 2012

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BOARD OF
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House Committee on Human Services
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER
John Lattimer

RE: HB 4165

Dear Co-Chairs Gilliam and Tomei and Members of the Committee:

DIRECTOR
Alison S. Kelley

On behalf of the Marion County Children and Families Commission and the communities served by commission members' work, I respectfully submit this testimony related to HB 4165, which is scheduled to be heard by the House Committee on Human Services at 3:00 pm February 8, 2012.



Marion County Children and Families Commission members generally feel that the local commission has been extremely effective in assisting children, youth and families achieve better outcomes by having the statutory authority to bring the right people to the table, ask tough questions, and develop innovative solutions that save money for taxpayers. Through our community-based strategies and investments we have safely reduced the numbers of children in foster care by 30% in four years, reduced the child abuse rate 29% in three years, and developed an innovative project to increase community literacy. As a result of that project and the hard work of educators and community members all over the county, 3rd and 8th grade reading scores are up and high school dropout rates are down. Our projects have been successful enough to attract impressive private investment over the last four years. That investment has allowed us to accelerate our impact to the extent that our local district attorney has called our commission a "force-multiplier."

Although you may hear some people argue that local commissions do not focus on achieving results, that is simply not the case. Most local commissions drive toward results and achieve, measure and report them regularly. Marion County is one of them.

For that reason, Marion County does **not** support the proposed elimination of funding for local commissions and programs on **June 30, 2012**.



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Instead, Marion County Commission members believe that an additional year of funding (FY 2012-13) would be very important to allow local commissions the opportunity to assist in engineering a smooth transition for commission-funded programs so that any new system that evolves could take advantage, or build on, current success. Putting it more simply, although the bath water might need to be changed, it is not a good idea to throw the baby out with it.

Marion County would support an amendment to HB 4165 that would provide for funding for local commission operations and programs for FY 2012-13. This position is consistent with the position taken by the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) and the Coalition of Local Commissions. It is my understanding that such an amendment is to be submitted by the Governor's Office.

For the record, Marion County is already implementing innovative changes to the way we do business in order to concentrate investment toward improving results for early learning, aligning early childhood outcomes with known kindergarten readiness indicators, and continuing to push literacy for children, youth, and adults. Our track record speaks for itself. Our goals are clear: we help families acquire the resources and skills they need to help their infants, toddlers, school-age children and youth be healthy and successful in school. When they are successful they have a greater likelihood of continuing their education post-high school, becoming employed, and becoming robust contributors to their communities and to Oregon's economy. Our community members and partners are invaluable allies in the effort to improve results, and we want to make sure the new model reflects those voices.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of this information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison S. Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Alison S. Kelley

Marion County Children & Families Commission

A community where everyone is committed to the well-being of children; families are nurtured; all community members are healthy; diversity is honored; people live and work together, encouraging and supporting one another.

Randy Franke, Chair
Open Doors Consulting

James Ryan Allbritton
US Bank Regional President

Eduardo Angulo
Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality Chairman

Walt Beglau
Marion County District Attorney

Gladys Blum
Gladys Blum Group

Louise Brantley
Stand For Children

Commissioner Sam Brentano
Marion County Board of Commissioners

Gayle Caldarazzo-Doty
Doty & Company, P.C.

Dr. Rod Calkins
Marion County Health Department Administrator

Teresa Cox
Community Action Agency Executive Director

Marilyn Dedrick
Silverton Together Community Progress Team

Donalda Dodson
Oregon Child Development Coalition Executive Director

René DuBoise
Oregon Department of Human Services District 3 Manager Marion, Polk, Yamhill

Faye Fagel
Marion County Juvenile Department Director

Terri Frohnmayer
First Commercial Real Estate Services LLC Principal

Norman Gruber
Salem Hospital Chief Executive Officer

Ron Hays
Marion Polk Food Share President

Dr. Sandy Husk
Salem Keizer Public School Superintendent

Charles Lee
Blanchet Catholic School President

Krina Lemons
Salem Keizer Education Foundation Executive Director

Dr. Matt Lucas
Corban University Provost

Pete McCallum
Woodburn City Council

Sheriff Jason Myers
Marion County Sheriff

Gregg Peterson
Broadway Café Owner

Hon. Tracy Prall
Marion County Juvenile Court Judge

Luz Rivera
Juntos Podemos Centro Para Familias, Together We Can Family Center Director

Dr. Cheryl Roberts
Chemeketa Community College President

Steve Silberman, Vice Chair
Statesman Journal Media President & Publisher

Tim Sinatra
Boys & Girls Club Executive Director

Sam Skillern
Salem Leadership Foundation Executive Director

Bill Winter
Silverton Health

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