

VICTOR ATIYEH  
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MEASURE: HB 4165  
EXHIBIT: 9  
2012 SESSION H RULES  
DATE: 2/8/12 PAGES: 1  
SUBMITTED BY: Elise Brown

House Human Services Committee

Dear Members,

I testify today as a former Governor who has seen the good things that happen when legislators come together from both sides of the aisle to take action. I believe you have such an opportunity in front of you today.

My testimony is also on behalf of the Ready for School Leaders panel. I have been an active member of this group for a number of years because I wholeheartedly believe that early education programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start are the most cost-effective way to put kids on the right path and build a healthy workforce.

I regret that I cannot be here in person, but I offer this testimony today to impress upon you the importance of enacting Early Learning HB4165.

This will give our state an unprecedented opportunity to change the rules of the game for the most disadvantaged children of Oregon, who despite our best efforts, are not arriving ready for kindergarten. As these children proceed through later grades the achievement gap becomes a wide chasm and has a long reach – effecting graduating rates, future earnings, and health outcomes.

HB4165 would require that the state put into place a kindergarten readiness assessment and establish a quality rating system for early education providers. Both of these achievements will help improve the quality of available early learning programs and provide critical information for parents, providers, educators and policy makers.

Moreover, early childhood programs of Oregon are currently scattered across six state agencies and subject to a chaotic governance of different rules, regulations and standards. This bill would build a more coherent and coordinated early childhood system by creating an oversight Early Learning Council and replacing the state commission system.

This legislature has already taken some important steps towards these goals by passing SB909 last session. I ask you to please carry forth the momentum that this bill – along with Governor Kitzhaber's exciting plan and vision – has generated. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity, both for ourselves and for the future of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Victor Atiyeh".

Victor Atiyeh