



Representative Vic Gilliam, Co-Chair
Representative Carolyn Tomei, Co-Chair
House Human Services Committee

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Written Testimony in Support of HB 4165 Regarding the Early Learning Council
Submitted by Elizabeth Large, Executive Vice President and General Counsel
Knowledge Universe—US

On behalf of Knowledge Universe, I would like to register our support for HB 4165 and its innovative approach to prioritizing early childhood education in Oregon. Knowledge Universe is the nation's largest private provider of early care and education serving families in 39 states and the District of Columbia through community-based KinderCare and Knowledge Beginnings Learning Centers, CCLC employer-sponsored early learning centers, and Champions which provides school-based before-and after-school academic enrichment programs and summer camps to primary and middle school students. KU is committed to providing a high quality early learning experience and has more nationally accredited centers than any other provider. We are proud to be one of the largest national companies based in Oregon and to employ more than 1,300 Oregonians at our national headquarters in Portland and our 28 early learning centers across the state.

HB 4165 recognizes the importance of investing in our youngest children as the foundation for preparing future generations for academic and career success. We agree that the best way to accomplish this is to enable families from all socioeconomic backgrounds to access quality early childhood services in their communities. We endorse the major design elements of this bill, particularly the fact that it is provider neutral, outcome based and incentivizes quality. We strongly support the implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System that includes tiered reimbursement for providers at the highest quality levels who serve families receiving state assistance.

As Oregon works toward economic recovery and looks to streamline and deliver greater services with limited resources, investing in our youngest children not only makes sense but it is truly the key to our state's economic vitality. We look forward to partnering with the Early Learning Council and local communities to accomplish these common goals. We urge you to take a positive step for Oregon's children by supporting HB 4165.