



MEASURE: HB 4165
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2012 SESSION RULES
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SUBMITTED BY: Mary Louise McClintock

February 8, 2012

RE: House Bill 4165

To Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) Board of Directors voted today to urge your support for HB 4165.

Early childhood development has been one of OCF's highest priorities for more than two decades, and we invest \$1-\$2 million per year in early care and learning programs. We strongly believe that programs reaching children 0-6 and their families are among the best investments we can make in the future of our state. There are excellent early childhood programs throughout Oregon, but our state's appalling 67 percent high school graduation rate and persistent achievement gap for children of color indicate we are falling alarmingly short when it comes to ensuring that all children get off to a good start.

HB 4165 sets in motion the first phase of early learning system changes recommended by the Early Learning Design Team and the Early Learning Council. OCF strongly supports changes that move Oregon toward more integration and coordination in leadership and implementation among early childhood programs at the state and local level; lead to greater alignment between early childhood and the K-12 and health care systems; ensure accountability for achievement of early childhood outcomes across programs; and make it easier for families to access services. HB 4165 calls for needed improvements such as a common early childhood data system, a "tiered" quality rating system for child care, and a reliable assessment of kindergarten readiness.

As you consider HB 4165 and other legislation affecting state early childhood programs, OCF encourages you to ensure that the new system promotes local mobilization and problem-solving, and that there is adequate focus on the critical first three years of life.

Above all, OCF urges prompt action on this legislation. There is much work to be done and many system implementation details still to be addressed. However, the Early Learning Council's vision rests on solid ground and the status quo is clearly unacceptable. The Oregon Community Foundation looks forward to working in partnership with the State of Oregon to ensure all Oregon children succeed.

Sincerely,

Max Williams
President

Eric Parsons
Board Chair

cc: Governor John Kitzhaber, M.D.
House and Senate Leadership