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To: Chair Gilliam and Chair Tomei  
Human Services Committee

Re: Public Testimony

Good afternoon. My name is Catherine Wiley, and I have been a homeowner and taxpayer in Oregon for over twenty-one years. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

The reason I'm here is because I am only one of hundreds of Oregon citizens who have demonstrated their dedication, care and contributions as volunteers in the thirty-six local Commissions on Children and Families. Over the past ten years, I have served as a member of the board and related committees for the local Curry County Commission.

We receive no income; have no "fringe benefits", no mileage reimbursement, travel budgets or expense accounts.

What we *do* have is a current collective of over five hundred volunteers who contribute their individual time, efforts and expertise in support of community based, local coalitions endeavoring to improve and strengthen the health and well-being of children and families in our communities. Our numbers include representatives from childhood and adult education, law enforcement, juvenile crime and prevention, faith communities, 4H, health care, and businesses. We are appointed by our Counties' Boards of Commissioners. And, we know, with 16 small, rural and remote counties, 14 medium sized counties, and 6 large, that one size does NOT fit all.

It is certain that the dollar value of these volunteer efforts over the fifteen years of the Commission on Children and Families easily exceeds millions of dollars. The coalitions built, and trust and respect earned, are incalculable. Our "jobs" include: planning, strategizing, and participating in meetings, developing coalition partners, evaluating funding proposals, monitoring, technical assistance, fund raising, grant writing, advocacy, and always dealing with needs that exceed resources.

Change/reorganization with the intent and purpose of improving resource utilization, funding allocations, cost effectiveness and accountable, positive outcomes should be a universal goal. But, change should be a process. The process should be inclusive, objective and not rash. Sort of like, "Not throwing the baby out with the bath water".

My background is medical. I was a Registered Nurse Practitioner, specializing in reproductive health, prior to retirement. One could say I've dedicated the majority of my life, education and professional career to children and families. I can say, unequivocally, that early learning capabilities do not begin *after* birth.

Perhaps, an alternative to "inventing new wheels", demolishing existing models, and ignoring/overlooking the enormous significance of local community involvement and investment would be to objectively and inclusively consider national data, evaluations and planning strategies.

Believe it, or not, despite Head Start being 45 years old, and costing over seven billion dollars annually to serve nearly one million children, the Department of Health and Human Services states there is indisputable evidence that Head Start simply doesn't work. (Attachment 1: Time Magazine, 7/18/2011, "Head Start Doesn't Work".)

Perhaps those findings may be argued, but are they even being considered?

In some contrast, however, "Implementing Healthy People 2020" is based on a simple but powerful model utilizing the "MAP-IT" framework to help:

- \* Mobilize partners
- \* Assess the needs of your community
- \* Create and implement a plan to reach (established) objectives
- \* Track your community progress

(Attachments 2 and 3)

Perhaps these elements may be components of the Early Learning strategy and reorganization. But, they are *exactly* what local Commissions have been doing for years. Wouldn't it be more productive, more cost-effective and more reasonable to *assess* the contributions and efforts of existing local, grass-roots county Commissions on Children & Families prior to discarding the significant contributions and coalitions they have made?

Thank you, sincerely, for your time and consideration.