



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony before Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
Tuesday March 10th, 2015

In Support of SB 500

Chair Gelser, Members of the Committee thank you for your time.

The Boys and Girls Club of America is a marvelous organization that is dedicated to serving the youth of our cities. To date over 3.8 million children have been served by this program and 57% of those young people credit the Boys and Girls Club with saving their lives. The Rockwood community currently has an unemployment rate of 13%, where 9 out of 10 children seek free or reduced school lunches, and only 46% of the students are on track to graduate on time. Rockwood has felt the effects of gentrification in the central city which has displaced many low income citizens to that area and is now more than ever in need of our support.

With a facility of their own, the Boys and Girls Club in Rockwood could provide a safe place for the children of Rockwood to learn and play. It will supply our community's children with educators and role models, to build self-confidence, grow personal responsibility, and inspire civic engagement.

The Boys and Girls club offers an alternative for parents and their children. With a 300% rise in gang membership, keeping students engaged and safe will have profound effects. 97% of students who are in boys and girls clubs around the country are on track to graduate from high school on time. This will lead to more of Rockwood's students going to universities, community colleges, and trade schools instead of joining a gang or depending on social services.

I support this bill; rarely can we find a way to so directly and positively affect an area. We must take every opportunity to better the lives of Oregon's youth. I strongly urge this committee to recommend SB 500 be passed by the Oregon Senate.

Sincerely,

State Representative Chris Gorsek
House District 49

