



**STATE SENATE**  
**DISTRICT 25**

**SB 500**  
March 10, 2015

SB 500 appropriates money for constructions of the Boys & Girls Club in Rockwood which is in my district. The Rockwood community faces critical challenges that place youth at tremendous risk. With the highest incidences of crime in our region's history, including gang violence, and drug and sex trafficking, we are trying to bring services with proven track records of success to Rockwood.

With the largest concentration of youth under the age of 18 within the metro region, Rockwood has led the State for the lowest academic performance and graduation rates. Over the past 10 years, gentrification has aggressively pushed poverty into east Multnomah County. 25% of families in Rockwood are living at or below the poverty level compared to 10% overall for Oregon. The median household earnings are 23% lower than average Portland Metro. Rockwood families are twice as likely to receive state food assistance compared to state statistics. Unemployment rates for individuals living in Rockwood near 13% compared to Oregon's 8% overall.

Nine out of 10 children living in Rockwood seek free or reduced lunch assistance. The Reynolds School District, serving Rockwood youth, post 57.9% of students on track to graduate on time compared to the national rate of 80%. 50% of the district's economically disadvantaged students are not on track to graduate on time. Only 50% of male student in the Reynold's District graduate on-time in 2013.

Services are woefully lacking in Rockwood as well as in East Multnomah County. Of the 500 organizations serving children & families in the Portland-Metro area, only 15 are located within the Rockwood community that has the largest incidences of crime in the state of Oregon, the worst in this region's history. Since 2006, gang related incidents across Multnomah County have increased 281%.

Fund raising has already started for the Rockwood Center. The primary goal is to raise \$9.5 million to build and maintain the new facility. We are requesting in SB 500 one million dollars to help in this endeavor. The entire campaign goal is \$13.2 million. Colleagues, we need to help the neediest and Oregon needs to be a partner in this endeavor. The Boys and Girls Clubs have a track record of making a positive difference in kids' lives and this facility will be a catalyst for positive change in my community. I urge support of SB 500.

