

VOICES SET FREE
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Senate Bill 790 seeks to get ahead of the problem of family violence. It provides a new tool for Oregon youth to learn about how they can prevent domestic violence in their adult lives. It is a well-accepted fact that family violence is an intergenerational problem where children growing up in family violence repeat these behaviors when they become adults.

My recommended way to grasp the potential of this proposed legislation is to consider the well-established metaphor of upstream and downstream. The difference was demonstrated in the number of heart attacks. It was only after prevention practices were added to the sophisticated rescue treatment for heart attacks, that the number of people dying of heart attacks plummeted. Belatedly, the medical system realized that they needed to look further upstream to find answers to why people were falling into the “heart attack” river. Now, almost everyone knows the importance of a low fat diet, exercise, stress reduction, and no smoking.

A strong parallel exists in the approach to domestic violence. The criminal justice system is the organization with sophisticated arrest procedures and complex incarceration protocols. Bill 790 adds upstream prevention by providing education to youth about the causes of family violence.

What do we learn about family violence when we look “upstream”? Perpetrators and victims tell us over and over again that the seeds of violence were sown in their own childhoods. The violence cycle infects the children caught between their parents. We need to intervene so our youth aren’t condemned to relive their parents’ violence. Upstream thinking in health care led us to prevention-solutions that dramatically reduced the number of heart attacks. Upstream thinking in the criminal justice system can lead us to violence prevention-solutions; this will cost less than building more prisons to hold the dramatic escalation in incarcerations.

Here are facts that are useful to know as you consider the importance of upstream solutions.

- With 5% of the world’s population, the United States has 25% of the world’s prisoners; 2.3 million criminals; up from 350,00 in 1972, yet crime rates have declined.
- Seven million, or **one in ten** of the nation’s children, have a parent under criminal justice supervision—in jail or prison, on probation, or parole. (San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents.)
- There are over 10,000 children in Washington County alone, who have a criminal justice involved parent. Portland State University Population Research Dept.
- 23 % of Oregon children live in poverty.*
- The women’s prison population in the State of Oregon has increased by 86% over the last ten years. Over 1,250 women are currently in Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville. The cost of a year’s incarceration in an Oregon prison for one person is about \$28,000.

- A woman or child is killed roughly every ten days in Oregon by a batterer. (Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence)
- Very often, children whose mother is incarcerated, are placed in foster care.
- More children enter foster care in Oregon than in nearly any other State, at a cost of about \$30,000 per year. 1.5% of Oregon children are placed in foster care, compared to 0.9% nationally.* (*Data from Children First Oregon, as reported in *The Oregonian* March 26, 2014.)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) is the term coined in a landmark research project funded by Kaiser Health and the national Communicable Disease Center that identified ten factors that predicted social, health, and emotional problems in adulthood. The original study of 17,000 persons was published in 1998 and has been confirmed in 57 additional studies over the next fifteen years, that have led to preventive upstream recommendations.

California and Washington added an “upstream” services so that vulnerable children of an incarcerated parent are protected by criminal justice policies that place the children’s welfare at the center of a new paradigm in criminal justice. Oregon can learn from the prevention models used in San Francisco and Seattle that incorporate preventive services into their criminal justice systems.

Senate Bill 790 Bill places the responsibility for domestic violence education within the Department of Human Services.

Is Oregon ready to invest significantly more resources in the future of youth right now? Successful models exist in San Francisco, New York City, and Seattle that Oregon should consider.

Oregon has the opportunity to make a dramatic step toward prevention by providing domestic violence education to all our youth. The first step is passing SB 790.

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Appendices:
Adverse Childhood Experiences Visual

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA:

Oregon's Key to Health Care Transformation

Save taxpayer dollars and save children's lives

"ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES"

(ACE) Study

In 1998, the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente engineered a study of over 18,000 adults to assess links between childhood trauma and adult health and well-being.

STUDY RESULTS

The ACEs clearly demonstrates that childhood trauma negatively impacts immediate and long-term health, social well-being, and lifespan. Any four of the listed childhood adverse experiences create enough trauma to generate high risk for complex and expensive social and physical challenges as they grow up.

98% of children in out of home care have a trauma history

51% have suffered 7+ events

80% have suffered 4+ events¹



OREGON MUST FUND CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS WHICH PREVENT AND TREAT CHILD TRAUMA

Without this commitment, we will never achieve health care transformation or Oregon's education goals.



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of Children's Programs

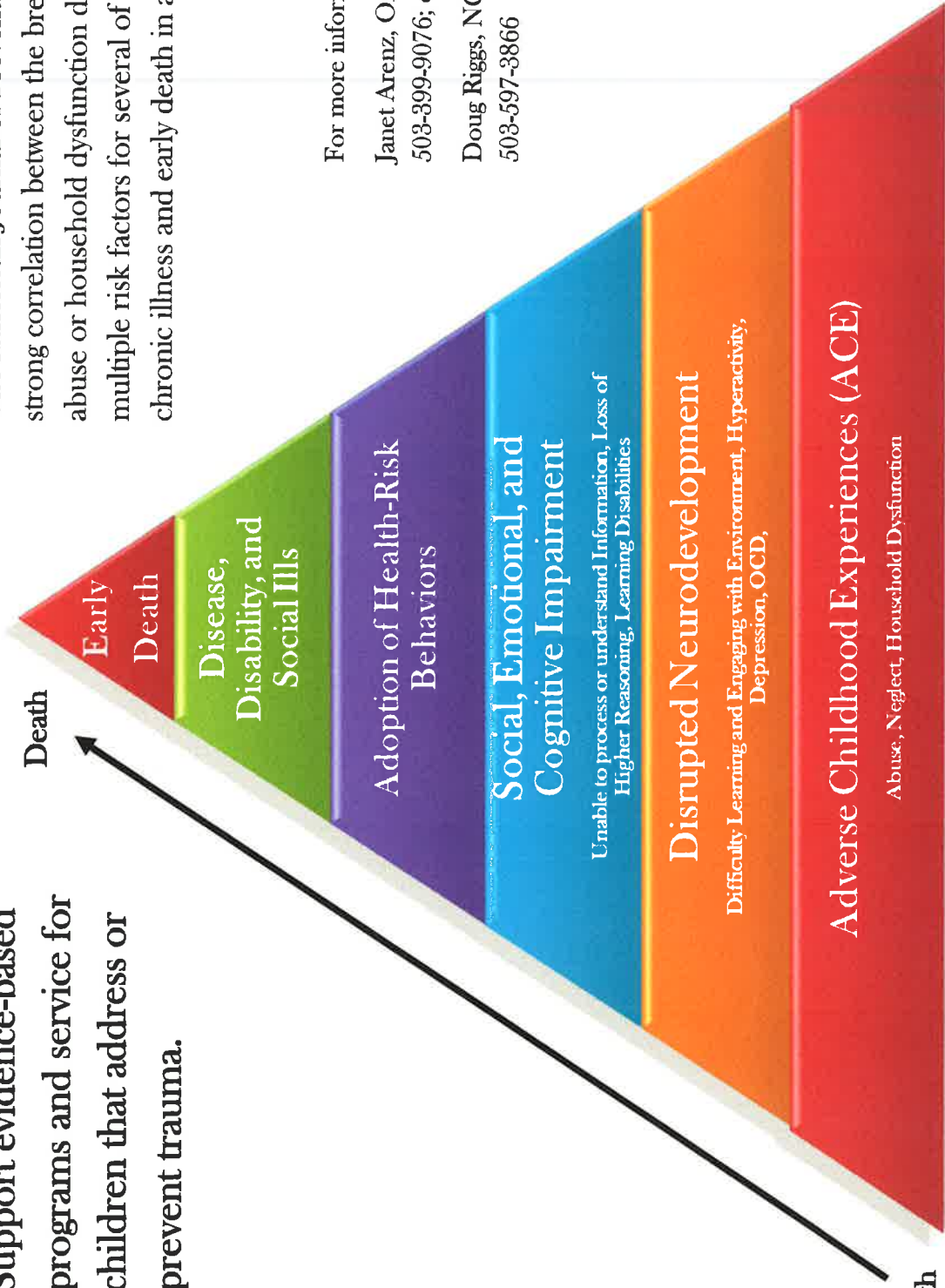
¹ 2012—Colorado Health Foundation Outcome Study

ACHIEVE OUTCOMES, RETURN ON INVESTMENT, AND SAVINGS

An investment in children today means they will not become the next chronically ill adults with complex, expensive needs. Together we can build healthy children, who become educated and working adults, and who will raise their own healthy families.

Support evidence-based programs and service for children that address or prevent trauma.

The American Journal of Preventative Medicine found a strong correlation between the breadth of exposure to abuse or household dysfunction during childhood and multiple risk factors for several of the leading causes of chronic illness and early death in adults.



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Birth

Death

**Early
Death**

**Disease,
Disability, and
Social Ills**

**Adoption of Health-Risk
Behaviors**

**Social, Emotional, and
Cognitive Impairment**

Unable to process or understand Information, Loss of
Higher Reasoning, Learning Disabilities

Disrupted Neurodevelopment

Difficulty Learning and Engaging with Environment, Hyperactivity,
Depression, OCD,

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

Abuse, Neglect, Household Dysfunction