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Here for Oregon. Here for Good.

April 9, 2015

Honorable Margaret Doherty
Chair, House Education Committee
State Capitol
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: HB 3380

Dear Chair Doherty:

We are writing to express the support of The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) for HB 3380, which would establish a "mixed-delivery" preschool program for the first time in Oregon.

Early childhood development has been one of OCF's highest priorities for more than two decades. In 2015 we will invest more than \$2.8 million in early care and learning through grants to community-based organizations and school districts throughout the state. OCF believes there is no more cost-effective investment we can make. We applaud the progress the State of Oregon has made over the last several years with early learning network-building at the local level, stronger connections between early learning and the health care and K-12 system, and improvements to child care provider training and quality strategies.

However, more action is needed to turn around our state's troubling education outcomes, especially for children from low-income, rural and minority communities. Access to quality preschool is known to lead to improved child outcomes, but it is estimated that 32,000 low-income children in Oregon do not now have access to such programs. This is because their family's income level exceeds the maximum for eligibility for Head Start, or because space is not available in their communities.

We believe HB 3380's framework – in involving a variety of community-based partners in provision of high quality preschool services – offers a promising strategy for reaching children from rural and culturally-specific communities. Establishment of this program would move Oregon forward on a path to expand access to early education services that can change lifelong outcomes for our most vulnerable children.

We urge you and your fellow committee members to give HB 3380 your support.

Sincerely,

Max Williams
President and CEO

Mary Louise McClintock
Director, Education Programs

cc: House Education Committee Members
Richard Donovan, Committee Administrator