



DATE: April 10, 2015

TO: Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee

FROM: Iris Maria Chavez, Government Affairs Director, Stand for Children Oregon

RE: House Bill 3380

Chair Doherty & Members of the committee,

We write to you today in support House bill 3380 and its focus on improving quality and access to pre-kindergarten throughout Oregon.

Stand members across the state have long been working on issues surrounding early childhood education. It is a cornerstone of our local advocacy and we're excited to work with a diverse group of partners such as the Children's Institute, the Black Parent Initiative, Family Forward and Children First Oregon, to name a few. Our members focus their advocacy efforts on early learning because we know that high quality early learning is a significant factor in whether low-income students and students of color enter kindergarten ready to learn. We also know that the learning that occurs in high quality preschool and pre-k provides benefits to the state in the amount of \$8.60, for every \$1 we spend.

Oregon has the opportunity, right now, to show a real commitment to ensuring young people are prepared for school. It is unfortunate that only seventy-two percent of 3 & 4 year olds from low-income families are able to access high-quality preschool. House bill 3380 would diversify the methods for preschool service delivery, while aligning with Oregon's Head Start efforts. This bill would also set quality standards, allowing parents to know more about the programs available to them and their children. Currently, programs vary greatly in quality and the ability for families to understand that variation has been challenging.

This is an exciting time, Oregon has been working to better align education systems from Kindergarten to higher education for several years and preschool has been the missing piece. We look forward to working with you and community partners on moving this piece of legislation forward.