



DATE: June 4, 2015

TO: Chair Barnhart and Members of the House Revenue Committee

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

RE: House Bill 2968

Chair Barnhart and Members of the House Revenue committee, I write to you today in support of House Bill 2968, an effort led by Representative Gene Whisnant. Representative Whisnant highlights an important issue for us.

At Stand for Children, we believe that education is the key that unlocks the door to success, however far too many children are not getting the education they need to prepare them for the future. Oregon's demographics are changing, these changes are increasing our school age population and increasingly our children are non-native English speakers and/or living in poverty. To these students, and for the future economic prosperity of Oregon, a high quality education is of the utmost importance.

In order for us as advocates, parents and policymakers to make important decisions about how best to educate our students we need to know better to what our education funds are currently going: to what programs, which services, and with what impact? Our members across the state frequently come to us with questions on "where is the money going?" They'll tell me that they know their school receives an additional .75 weight (when they are both an ELL student and a poverty student) to provide additional services to the student, but the question remains "what is that money going to?"

HB 2968, Representative Whisnant's bill having districts report out on the funding they receive for students identified as living in poverty would allow the state to better understand where successful efforts, and uses of dollars, are underway and where trouble areas may lie. This kind of information, very similar to what is being asked of schools & districts in House Bill 3499 for ELL funding, can only help us improve our education system in Oregon.

We applaud Representative Whisnant's attention to this issue, his commitment to ensuring Oregon students are getting the education they need and deserve and urge you to also support House Bill 2968.