



# Children's Institute

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February 26, 2016

Senator Mark Hass, Chair  
Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Hass and Members of the Committee,

The Children's Institute supports the passage of SB 1545, authorizing the creation of children's special districts. The Children's Institute is dedicated to working for Oregon's underserved children age birth through eight. We know these years provide the critical foundation for children's learning and development.

This bill would provide a mechanism whereby communities could locally fund and care for children that are not currently served by programs in their area. The funding would ease the burden on programs that already exist but do not serve all children who need it. We encourage you to amend the legislation to explicitly allow for early childhood program to be funded through these districts. We know that children in poverty that participate in early childhood, after-school, and summer school programs are more likely to be successful in school and become contributing citizens in their communities. They are more likely to be able to have opportunities for adequate nutrition, which helps them do better in school. Children from low-income families who do not have the opportunity to participate in these programs are less likely to graduate high school and find long-term success in life.

We need this bill. Please provide communities with the opportunity to engage local voters in helping children succeed.

Sincerely,

Dana Hepper  
Director of Policy & Program

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