



February 27, 2017

Senator Mark Hass, Chair; Senator Brian Boquist Vice Chair;
Senator Herman Baertschiger, Jr.; Senator Chuck Riley; Senator Kathleen Taylor
Senate Finance and Revenue Committee

Dear Senators Hass, Boquist, Baertschiger, Riley and Taylor:

I write to you today in **support of SB 123** relating to the Children's Special Districts Bill. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and ReadyNation with a combined national membership of over 7000 members with over 200 in Oregon, support investments in children. Some of those investments include early childhood care and after school. We believe that this change will allow communities to better serve their own needs and invest in their kids.

Law enforcement leaders know that the prime time for juvenile crime is between the hours of 3 and 6 pm when children and teens are out on the street with neither constructive activities nor adult supervision. This is when juvenile crime suddenly soars – kids commit crimes or they become victims of crime. Our business leaders also know that if students are in constructive programs, they are more likely to graduate from high school and become part of a viable work force.

Consider the facts. Child poverty continues to rise in Oregon. Child abuse and neglect continues to eat away at our state funding. Graduation rates are among the lowest in the nation – 48th – only 2 states are below Oregon. To look at the numbers and the lack of services and options in this state, will tell you there is a high need and demand for two-generation services for children from zero to 18 and their parents; however, funding for those children/programs is sorely lacking. To provide much needed out of school activities, support to families and quality programs, would help our kids be successful and at the same time reduce the amount of funding needed to address the problems. Depending on the program, there is a savings of between \$3-15 for every dollar invested.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and ReadyNation support the Children's Special Districts Bill as it will allow voters in their own communities to decide if and how much they want to invest in their children and provide local dollars for such programs. We understand that local governments and municipalities do govern, but there is a lack of interest and understanding of what these needs are. As state legislators, you see the big picture and see the need statewide. Your budgets are tight and you cannot always provide the necessary resources. Many local communities not only want more services, they are willing to vote and pay for them if given the opportunity. What stands in their way is the mechanism to raise those funds.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and ReadyNation ask you to support SB 123 and move it out of committee to the floor for a vote. Give communities the opportunity to give their kids a chance to get on the right track and succeed in life.

Sincerely:

Martha Brooks

Martha Brooks - Oregon State Director, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids & ReadyNation

CC: Governor Kate Brown, Oregon

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