

April 17, 2017

Representative John Lively
Representative Jodi Hack
Representative Carla Piluso
Representative Janelle Bynum
Representative Cedric Hayden
Representative John Huffman
Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer
Representative Sheri Malstrom
Representative David Brock Smith

RE: HB 3069, submitted via email to hecfs.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood & Family Supports,

My name is Holly Levow. I am a partner at Social Venture Partners Portland and work closely with Latino Network.

I am writing today to support HB 3069, creating the Early Learning Equity Fund.

Oregon's population is changing rapidly – more than 35% of babies born in 2014 are children of color, and in several Oregon counties, a majority of children under 5 are children of color. State funding for early learning has not kept pace with these changes. As Oregon becomes more diverse, it's imperative that our state invest in culturally-specific programs that lead to better outcomes for children of color.

Expanded state funding for important early learning programs such as Head Start, Oregon Promise, Juntos Aprendemos and many others is critical. And, we see opportunity to strengthen the state's portfolio of early learning services through the creation of the Early Learning Equity Fund to support culturally specific early learning and parent education services. The Early Learning Equity fund created by HB 3069 would provide grants to culturally specific organizations with a track record of reaching, retaining and supporting children of color and their families. This investment would be an important starting point to reaching more families who are currently left behind by existing programming.

I have witnessed the great benefits of having early childhood education programs like Juntos Aprendemos in our community and feel this Early Learning Equity Fund is greatly needed to reach such a marginalized segment of our population. Every child has the right to start school on equal footing and HB 3069 will assist organizations to reach that goal.

Sincerely,

Holly Levow

Partner, Social Ventures Partners Portland