



May 9, 2017

Representative John Lively, Chair
Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Lively and Representatives,

Children First for Oregon is the primary source for data on the wellbeing of Oregon's 860,000 kids. Our program, United for Kids, works with numerous partners to make Oregon the best place to be a kid.

Quality child care not only helps a child have better health and educational outcomes¹, but allows their parents to provide for their families. For all the difficulties working parents face to find suitable care for their children, it is even more difficult for those seeking work. Not every parent has a relative or neighbor available to watch their children while they seek a job to feed these same children. Parents who finally land a job interview and lack child support face a daunting choice: skip the interview or leave their child in an unsupervised location where they could be charged with child neglect in the second degree.²

Many are familiar with the story of the single mother who chose the job interview. It is in the interest of the state to prevent such an impossible choice forced upon a parent striving to improve themselves and the lives of their children.

The concept behind HB 3451 is simple: if eligible parents enroll in the federally funded SNAP jobs program, they become eligible for ERDC for up to three months.

In 2015 the legislature passed, without opposition in the House, an improvement to child care subsidies promoting self-reliance, education, removing the benefit cliff, and incentivizing better care.³ HB 3451 allows us to leverage existing federal money that will allow parents to enroll in job training while their children receive the care they need.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregon's kids.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tonia Hunt", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tonia Hunt
Executive Director

¹ The Economics of Early Childhood Investments. Rep. Executive Office of the President: The White House. Web. Dec. 2014

² ORS 163.545 – A person having custody or control of a child under 10 years of age commits the crime of child neglect in the second degree if, with criminal negligence, the person leaves the child unattended in or at any place for such period of time as may be likely to endanger the health or welfare of such child. – Class A misdemeanor

³ 2015's HB 2015