

February 27, 2017

Dear Senator Riley,

I am writing this letter in support of Senate Bill (SB) 123, which authorizes children's special districts to levy property taxes to fund programs that offer critical and much needed services to children.

In an environment where resources are limited and public schools continue to experience financial shortfalls, it is critical that we explore options for developing and measuring shared outcomes and build a more robust and authentic programming for our children, particularly for those who are not yet old enough to enroll in kindergarten. Enrolling in kindergarten school ready is one of the greatest predictors for school success. Unfortunately, not all preschool age children have access to quality childcare or preschool experiences. I believe it is a moral imperative that we as citizens place the education of our young children at the top of our list!

As a community leader and director of federal programs in a school district, I have had opportunities to apply for state grants that support early learning and extended day programs for children zero to 21 years of age. I have seen first-hand the benefits of these programs and the impact they have on children's growth and development.

However, these funds typically come with restrictions, and prioritizing services in ways that only some children are served only perpetuates an educational system that does not promote social equality or full human development to the fullest. This is unacceptable, and I know we can do better to provide a quality and transformative learning for our children.

Educational research on early childhood as a means of promoting school readiness strongly supports a caring, safe and stimulating environment for the development of children's critical consciousness. We can provide a quality education and programming for our children if we create funding sources that can sustain overtime.

As an advocate for the children of Hillsboro and the State of Oregon, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 123, the best interest of our future.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olga L. Acuña', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Olga L. Acuña