



June 14, 2017

Representative Phil Barnhart
Members of the House Revenue Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Children's Special Districts (SB123)

Chair Barnhart and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Washington County Kids, I would like to express our strong support for the Children's Special District bill (SB 123). This bill will allow the formation of special districts that can provide sustainable funding for children and youth during non-school time (early childhood, afterschool, and summer programs).

We are a coalition of over 140 individuals and organizations that recognize the importance of these programs in promoting academic and career success. Their success has been well-documented in early childhood programs as well as after school and summer programs (<http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Community%20Schools%20An%20Evidence%20Based%20Strategy.pdf>).

The need for additional support for these programs is great:

- *Child Poverty is Rising: Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) eligibility escalated from 22% of Washington County students in 2000 to 36.8% in 2016. The number of schools with more than 50% FRL eligible students increased from 10 to 35 schools in the same period.
- *Child abuse continues to affect approximately 400 children per year in the county, which adds up to approximately 7,200 abused children over an 18 year period. Abuse leads to school failure, juvenile crime, addiction to drugs and alcohol, and early sexual activity.
- *79% of children under 5 years of age and living in poverty do not have access to affordable, quality child care. Only 21% of children eligible in the County for Head Start and Early Head Start are able to participate in those programs due to a lack of funding.
- *There are not enough after school programs for older children. Too many are left unsupervised or with unskilled child care providers. Programs exist in several locations but most are too expensive for people in poverty and/or they have long waiting lists.
- *Too few summer programs; summer programs need to serve more kids. By the fifth grade, children from families with low incomes fall behind their classmates academically by as much as three years without summer support.

With the passage of SB123 members of the community will be able to pursue development of funding for expansion of existing programs and implementation of new ones that will support the academic success of our children.

SB123 p2.

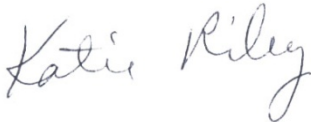
These programs are a win/win for all:

1. Our children get the programs they need to succeed in school from 0-18 years of age. It provides enough money to make a difference.
2. The money is locally raised and spent in the local area - in addition to funding programs, it creates jobs and stimulates the local economy.
3. It is budget-neutral – a small amount covers overhead, the rest goes to programs.
4. The result: young children ready to learn, increased graduation rates, kids engaged in healthy activities, lower drop-out rates, and lower juvenile crime rates.

Special Districts will allow the people of each area to choose their own solutions to these growing needs. In Washington County our polling showed that more than 57 percent of voters would support raising sustainable funding through a local tax.

Thank you for supporting Oregon's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Riley".

Katie Riley, Ed.D.
Chair
Washington County Kids

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