



Children's Institute

childinst.org

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June 14, 2017

Representative Phil Barnhart
Members of the House Revenue Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Barnhart and Members of the Committee,

The Children's Institute supports the passage of SB 123, authorizing the creation of children's special districts. The Children's Institute is dedicated to working for Oregon's underserved children age birth through eight. We know these years provide the critical foundation for children's learning and development.

This bill would provide a mechanism whereby communities could locally fund and care for children that are not currently served by programs in their area. The funding would ease the burden on programs that already exist but do not serve all children who need it. For example, across Oregon only 37% of low-income children have access to high quality preschool. Just 20% of families facing substantial risk factors have a trained home visitor available to provide proven parent coaching and support.

We know that children in poverty that participate in early childhood, after-school, and summer school programs are more likely to be successful in school and become contributing citizens in their communities. They are more likely to be able to have opportunities for adequate nutrition, which helps them do better in school. Children from low-income families who do not have the opportunity to participate in these programs are less likely to graduate high school and find long-term success in life.

We need this bill. Please provide communities with the opportunity to engage local voters in helping children succeed.

Sincerely,

Dana Hepper
Director of Policy & Program

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