



February 21, 2017

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Monnes Anderson and Senators,

Children First for Oregon is the primary research source for child wellbeing data in Oregon. Along with our partners in United for Kids, we work every day to make Oregon the best place to be a kid. We advocate for the structures, policies and programs that can protect the economic security, education, health and safety of all children in Oregon.

Since Governor Kulongoski and the legislative Health Care committees championed HB 2116 in 2009 creating the Health Care for All Oregon Children Program, 98% of children in Oregon have access to health care coverage. It is a statistic that this state should be proud of. SB 558 fulfills the promise of HB 2116 by closing the gap and providing access to the remaining 17,600 kids who need it. Children are children and deserve the same access to become healthy, productive members of the Oregon family.

Access to health coverage increases future wealth and income levels, reduces high school drop-out rates while increasing college graduation rates, and reduces emergency room visits, adolescent drinking and mortality. This is the very essence of the importance of coverage. It is measurable, a valuable return on investment and the right thing to do.

Oregon has been a national leader in health care, bending the cost curve while increasing overall health. We ask you to support SB 558 and extend a bright and healthy future to *all* of Oregon's children.

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