



February 20, 2017

Dear Chair Greenlick, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 555 represents over 20,000 workers in Oregon and Southwestern Washington. Our membership is comprised of workers in retail, manufacturing, health care, and many other industries. We are a diverse group of workers that have grown into being the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. As a member of the Fair Shot for All Coalition, we respectfully urge you to support HB 2726 to cover all kids.

Every child has the right to grow up healthy. In Oregon, we've made good progress toward ensuring that every child has critical health coverage--yet nearly 18,000 kids remain uninsured. Many of these children are growing up in families that struggle to afford the basics and often start life several steps behind.

HB 2726 extends the Oregon Health Plan to all children residing in Oregon up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line. This extension will ensure that all children have access to the health care services they need to be successful in school and in their lives. Additionally, HB 2726 guarantees culturally competent outreach to newly eligible children and their families.

The future of healthy and thriving children depends on timely and preventative health care. Health is a foundational aspect of children's ability to develop, learn and thrive. Data shows that uninsured children achieve lower educational outcomes than those with insurance, which in turn is related to long-term productivity and earnings. Our state benefits from a more skilled workforce and a stronger economy.

All children deserve the chance to succeed in school and life--and staying healthy is key to that success. By covering all kids in Oregon we will strengthen our state and ensure that every child is on a pathway to success.

Thank you,

Kevin Billman
Director of Legislative and Community Action
UFCW Local 555