



February 20, 2017

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

Oregon AFSCME Council 75, representing more than 25,000 working people, asks the committee to support HB 2726 to provide healthcare for every child in Oregon.

Every child deserves a healthy start in life. Health insurance coverage is one of the single most effective ways to ensure that children receive the preventative health and medical care they need to thrive in school and life. In Oregon, 2 percent of low-income children do not have any medical coverage even if income eligible. This means that uninsured children must delay or go without essential doctor visits and medications.

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.

Oregon needs to take the next step and extend healthcare coverage to all children. Oregon AFSCME joins a broad coalition urging the passage of HB 2726 to cover all kids. By covering all kids in Oregon, we will ensure that every child is on a pathway to success.

Respectfully Submitted,

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