



Testimony in Support of SB 558

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Director of Health Policy

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Dear Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association, representing over 14,000 registered nurses in our state, I urge you to support 558. As nurses, ONA members know that primary and preventative care, especially for children, is critical to overall health and improved outcomes in our communities, which is why we recommend extending health care to all Oregon children.

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.

SB 558 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, SB 558 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. Access to health coverage results in lower high school dropout rates, as well as increases in college attendance and completion. SB 558 better ensures that on day one of school all children come into class healthy and ready to learn, with their most basic needs being met.

Oregon needs to take the next step and extend healthcare coverage to all children. The Oregon Nurses Association supports SB 558 as a vital step toward expanding access to care and improving health outcomes for all families in our state.

I hope that you will join Oregon's nurses and support SB 558.