



February 20, 2017

Chair Monnes-Anderson and Members
Senate Healthcare Committee

The Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) is the state's oldest, grassroots organization committed to uniting Asians and Pacific Islanders. We leverage the collective strength of our 7,000 statewide members to advance equity through empowering, organizing, and advocating with our communities. Together with signatory partners from our Statewide VOTE Network, we urge your support for SB 558: Cover All Kids.

We believe every child matters and deserves the rights, resources, and opportunities to thrive. Over 100 organizations, from healthcare providers, insurers, and community advocates agree. Together, we believe children should have access to affordable healthcare regardless of their citizenship status. 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.

APANO has worked closely on health access issues, identifying issues in our joint Mend the Gap Report of 2015 with the Oregon Health Equity Alliance, and working closely on the bipartisan legislation to cover up to 1,500 COFA Pacific Islander adults. While we have made significant progress in expanding coverage throughout the state, this progress has yet to reach Oregon's most vulnerable children. We applaud the efforts of the Oregon Latino Health Coalition and their coalition to ensure all children have healthcare in our state. We also recognize that SB 558: Cover All Kids will directly address health disparities in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, extending healthcare to hundreds of our uninsured children.

Children must have healthy beginnings if they are to reach their full potential. Children who have fallen into the achievement gap are often the same children who experience health disparities, come from working poor households, and face instability in their daily lives. SB 558: Cover All Kids is a concrete step towards reversing this cycle.

Please support and vote yes on SB 558: Cover All Kids.

Sincerely,

Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons
Executive Director
APANO