

February 21, 2017

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the 15,000 members represented by the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, I respectfully request your support for Cover All Kids - SB 558.

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 throughout 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 and an increase in college attendance and completion. SB 558 ensures that on day one of school all children come into class healthy and ready to learn.

Oregon needs to take the next step and extend healthcare coverage to all children. AFT-Oregon supports SB 558 because we believe in a state where all children have access to the services they need to be successful.

We hope that you will join us in support of Cover All Kids - SB 558.

Sincerely,



Marcus Swift
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs
AFT-Oregon