



March 13, 2019

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

RE: Support for HB 3178

Children First for Oregon urges support of HB 3178. This bill would increase state funding for Child Abuse Intervention Centers (CAICs) to support more children in Oregon to access forensic interviews, family advocacy, and child abuse medical assessment from providers with the specific expertise needed to allow them to begin healing.

Children First represents the interests of Oregon's nearly 875,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. Through the development of the Children's Agenda we work with our more than 110 partner organizations to identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children. HB 3178 is part of the 2019 Children's Agenda.

Children First closely tracked the Interim Work Group on Child Abuse Intervention and Prevention, and appreciate the attempts in this bill and others being heard today to address child abuse. We all hope for a world where there is no child abuse, but that is not the current reality. We believe that we all need to work together to elevate the importance of child abuse prevention efforts including strengthening programs that help economically stabilize families, enacting policies and funding programs to provide stable housing, universally offering home visiting, increasing access to mental health and substance use treatments, and parenting education. As Children First and our partners advocate for systemic prevention programs, we need to support the children who experience child abuse today. CAICs are an essential component of that support.

CAICs intervene and reduce trauma, giving kids a better chance at a happy, healthy adulthood. 24 CAICs serve all 36 counties and require local buy-in to form and lead each community's child abuse response. They have strong partnerships with law enforcement, child welfare, schools, medical providers, and community-based nonprofits. CAICs are poised for increased services and growth, and want to serve more kids. For a stronger future, Oregon needs strong CAICs. The funding request in HB 3178 will help CAICs provide the services and care our children need and deserve.

Thank you very much for your attention and service. We request your support of HB 3178.

Sincerely,
Chris Coughlin, Legislative Director