



March 25, 2019

Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee,

RE: Children First for Oregon supports SB 5512

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. Having a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home is critical for children and families, and several parts of SB 5512 are on the 2019 Children's Agenda.

Oregon is in the middle of a statewide housing crisis. In both urban and rural areas, families are dealing with homelessness. Over 21,000 students in Oregon's K-12 schools last school year faced housing instability and were found to "lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

We urge you to provide additional resources to support **preventing or ending homelessness**, through an investment of **\$50 million in on-going funds for the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program** and **\$20.5 million to support preventing and ending homelessness specifically for children and families by adopting Policy Package 108: Reduce Child Homelessness.**

Children often enter foster care for multiple reasons. One factor tracked by the Department of Human Services is inadequate housing and the stress that puts on families. The number of removals including housing instability, including homelessness, has been growing over the last three years from 13.1% in 2015 to 17.2% in 2017. All children deserve an opportunity to succeed in school and life, which is tied to having a stable home. Too many Oregon families and children lack a stable home.

Oregon's housing crises is going to require dozens of solutions, but focusing on preventing and reducing homelessness among Oregon families is one of the most critical. Oregon communities are stronger when everyone, especially children, has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Children First supports SB 5512. Thank you very much for your attention and service.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director