



Date: April 11, 2019

To: Joint Committee on Student Success

From: Andrea Paluso, Family Forward Oregon

RE: Position statement on HB 2019, Student Success Act

Chairs Roblan and Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Knopp and Smith, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2019. Family Forward Oregon is committed to advancing policies that support women and families and help them to achieve economic stability, including policies that directly benefit parents and young children.

Oregon is experiencing a child care and education crisis that is directly related to not adequately funding the kinds of supports that children and families rely upon to thrive. Not enough children at all ages are getting the high-quality and stable child care and educational supports that they need to thrive now and into the future — and that their parents need in order to achieve and sustain family economic stability. This problem presents itself differently for different families and for children at different ages, but is most pronounced during the earliest years, with our greatest gaps in investment in services for infants and toddlers. The earliest years of life are the most critical to a child's development, and they are also the time in a parents' life when their conflicts between caregiving and working are most pronounced.

Investments in programs that support early childhood can have positive impacts on two generations of Oregonians (children and parents) and support us developing thriving communities. Investments in services that wrap around educational programs of all kinds, to ensure parents can remain employed and that kids are well cared for and supported, are also critical additions to existing K-12 educational programs.

This year, Oregon has a once in a generation opportunity to invest in education and related supports. Investments in early childhood are among the most effective expenditures we can make as a state, which is why we so strongly support The Student Success Act investments in early childhood education, including fully funding Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special

Education, investing in professional development for early childhood educators, expanding access to relief nurseries, expanding the Oregon Pre-K Program, Head Start and Preschool Promise. We also hope those investments will include Baby Promise, a program which will help address the shortage of infant and toddler care statewide (a problem that is exacerbated if we only make state investments in programs for children 3 and older).

We are asking this body to take this rare opportunity to give Oregon families the services that they need so they can both provide for one another and take full advantage of the very years that set the stage for those to come in K-12 and beyond. Please support HB 2019.