



Testimony in support, SB 543
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at 1pm in HR 50

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chairs Noble and Sanchez, and members of the Committee,

The Oregon Commission for Women, in its role of advocate for the women and girls of Oregon, urges the committee to support the passage of SB543 to add children's service districts to the 27 currently allowed special districts. This bill would enable a region to establish such a district with the authority to impose a new property tax amount to fund in support of our children out of school time (OST) programs which includes early childhood, after-school programs, summer programs, and activities in arts, music, recreation, health, technology, and skill development.

As listed in ORS 198.010, there are 27 service district options for voters so jurisdictions may fund critical local services. Districts deal with water, fire protection, cemetery maintenance along with many other areas. SB543 provides an option for voters to meet the needs of children in their community. In all parts of the state, there is a lack of child care and afterschool options, resulting in reduced opportunities and positive outcomes for children.

Both children and parents, especially working mothers, would benefit from these programs. Oregon is challenged by a lack of success for many of its children, especially for those from communities of color. OST helps to promote educational access for all. Research indicates the positive benefit of OST programs on academic success, graduation rates, and social and emotional skill development (Rand Corporation, 2017). Quality child care and after school programs have long term effects on graduation and eventual career success (Parks, 2000). These programs promote learning and opportunity for those children who might otherwise not have access to these experiences.

Childcare is a must for working parents and these programs have a demonstrable impact on the workforce, especially for the female parent or caretaker. Research shows that women who make use out of school programs for their children have fewer absences and greater earning power (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2017). In addition, families with reduced childcare costs have more funds to cover housing, food, and medical care expenses (McCluskey, 2018).

SB543 does not use State funds but allows local voters to organize children's service districts in a manner that best serves the children of their community. It is a short-term investment with long-term benefits.

OR Commission for Women

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Dr. Barbara Spencer

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The Oregon Commission for Women urges an Aye vote on SB543.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr. Barbara Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail.

Dr. Barbara Spencer,
Chair