



Senate Committee on Human Services

Testimony in support of extending eligibility for Oregon Promise to foster children who attain their highest level of education while in out-of-state placement as set forth in SB 1566

Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Heard and members of the Committee.

My name is Trish Garner and I am the State Public Policy Chair of the American Association of University Women of Oregon. AAUW has been empowering women since 1881 by advancing equity through advocacy, education, and research.

AAUW of OR writes this testimony in support of the portion of HB 1566 that authorizes foster children in out-of-state placements to be eligible for Oregon Promise on the basis of education obtained while out of state. The fact that we have only endorsed this portion of the bill does not in any way indicate our opposition to the remainder of the bill. The foster care system is complicated and we don't want to weigh in on such an important matter if we don't believe we have sufficient expertise with which to do so. We are entirely gratified to see that the problem of out-of-state placements of our foster children is being so seriously addressed. We stand behind and highly applaud these efforts.

If there is one approach we do not wish to adopt with foster children who already face significant challenges, it is to detract from their successes. If they have completed Oregon Promise educational requirements when the state has moved them from their home state to another, they should be given credit for that work. Their efforts need to be rewarded, not discounted.

Attention to the educational needs of children in foster care is critical in providing a framework for future success. Research has shown that students in foster care are one of the most educationally vulnerable populations of youth.<sup>1</sup> We should not add to that burden.

AAUW of OR urges you to extend Oregon Promise eligibility to Oregon foster children in out-of-state placements based on their highest level of educational attainment as set forth in SB 1566.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Clemens, Klopfenstein, Lalonde and Tis, *The effects of placement and school stability on academic growth trajectories of students in foster care*, Children and Youth Services Review, 2018, <https://www.unco.edu/cebs/foster-care-research/pdf/Academic-Growth-Trajectories.pdf>.

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