



June 25, 2020

Joint Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, Co-Vice Chair Girod, Co-Vice Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

In 2020, after working in partnership for three years, Children First for Oregon (CFFO) and The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon (CTFO) merged to form **Our Children Oregon (OCO)**. OCO's mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. We elevate data and the voices of communities to amplify the need and collaboratively develop policy and public investments to improve overall child and family well-being across the state. We continue to convene the Children's Agenda, a partnership of 120 organizations, looking at the holistic needs of children.

The systemic racism within our policing organizations has a very long history in our country and our state and now is the time to make change. **We look to the Legislative People of Color Caucus for their continued leadership on the legislative concepts, and hope that amendments are made available to address BIPOC community concerns that have been raised with the bills.**

We also support the calls from advocacy organizations including Unite Oregon, PAALF, and Urban League to support a community-led effort to re-imagine safety and resilience so that we take this opportunity to shift away from an overreliance on police and toward an investment in the health and well-being of our communities.

As a children's advocacy organization, we see police accountability as a children's issue. Police brutality and the lack of accountability is a public health threat for children, their families, and their communities. We need to reimagine and rebuild our communities so that all children can feel safe and that they belong. As we work on that, legislation to fundamentally change our policing systems will save children's lives. It will protect their families and save the lives of their caregivers. It will foster their mental and

physical health, reducing their exposure to adverse experiences, trauma, and toxic stress. Eliminating police brutality will have life-long implications for our state's children, particularly Black children.

As you consider legislation during this upcoming Special Session, we urge you to be open to what is possible. Let's reimagine the world we want to live in and make it real with each decision we make!

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director

Jenifer Wagley
Executive Director