



February 3, 2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot 110 Implementation
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 572

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children and youth have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First For Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities.

All our young people need strong relationships with trusted, supportive adults in their lives to help them reach their full potential, but in today's world there are too many young people who lack those relationships.

SB 572 provides a technical fix so that vulnerable youth between the ages of 18 and 21 can ask an Oregon court to appoint a trusted adult as their guardian. The youth who would benefit from this bill are non-US citizens without current permanent legal immigration status who cannot be reunified with one or both parents because of abuse or neglect and for whom being returned to their country of origin is not in their best interest. These youth are at high risk of houselessness and being victims of human trafficking. With SB 572, Oregon has the opportunity to join Washington, California, Colorado and other states that already protect these youth, allowing a legal guardianship to support these youth and remove a barrier for these youth to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile status. These are our children - our youth - and we must do what we can to ensure their safety, and provide opportunities for them to establish and maintain connections with supportive adults.

Our Children Oregon urges your support of SB 572.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director