

May 4, 2021

In support of SB 299: Children's Service Districts

Dear Chair Wilde, Vice Chairs Leif and Lively, Representatives Valderrama and Zika,

As a former Allocations Committee Member of the Portland Children's Levy, former chair of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing, and former member of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports, I have been a long-time children's advocate and supporter of allowing taxpayers to choose which issues they want to fall under the special district status.

Thus, I co-sponsored SB 543 in 2019 and SB 123 in 2017, and am an enthusiastic supporter of SB 299 in 2021. Let's finally get this bill over the finish line!

Listed in ORS 198.010, there are 28 service district options for voters so they may fund critical local services. With districts dealing with water, fire protection, cemetery maintenance and others, voters should have the option to meet the needs of children in their area.

The well-being of our children, our most precious asset, is one issue that many taxpayers, such as myself and the vast majority of Portlanders who have voted repeatedly to renew our Children's Levy, feel strongly should qualify for that special status.

At-risk children who participate in early childhood, after-school, and summer programs with nutritional and educational enhancements are more likely to be successful in school and thrive throughout life.

Children's Service Districts require no state or federal funding, and the decision to tax is up to the members of the local communities. There is a limited amount of federal and state funds available for OST (Out of School Time), after-school, or summer programs.

Most counties do not allocate any of the limited amount of pass-through federal money to these programs. Some cities provide limited funding. Non-profit programs are not available in all geographic areas. Access is difficult for many children due to wait lists, fees, and/or transportation barriers. Recreation programs usually require additional fees and may also be difficult to access due to transportation barriers or physical limitations.

Providing a local option for taxpayers to decide where their taxes are most needed allows our communities to take care of their own needs. Please see the **attached one-pager** for more information and a long list of endorsers.

I urge your support (and ideally your co-sponsorship) of SB 299!

Sincerely,



Alissa Keny-Guyer
Former Oregon State Representative, HD 46

Senator Chuck Riley – Senate District 15

Vote YES on SB 299A – The Children’s Service Districts Bill

SB 299A would establish a new type of district to provide Children’s Services outside of school time (OST). SB 299A allows Oregon citizens the right to collect signatures to put an initiative on the ballot for voters to determine if their local community supports the formation of a Children’s Service District. SB 299A does not ask for State Funds. “Children’s Services” are broadly defined so that a community can customize the services being offered to best meet their children’s unique needs outside of school hours.

Why is a Children’s Service District Needed?

- Lack of program availability and inadequate funding to provide OST support for children under the age of 18.
- Even prior to the pandemic, it was very difficult and costly to obtain quality early childhood, after school and summer care for children. The pandemic has exacerbated this problem, particularly for working women and communities of color.
 - Low and middle-income families with childcare needs are struggling with the high cost. With fewer programs as a result of COVID-19, costs will only get higher and availability will be limited.
- OST programs promote academic success, higher graduation rates, positive behavior and safety, and good citizenship.
 - By the time they reach 5th grade, economically disadvantaged children who do not participate in OST summer programs average 3 years behind their middle-income peers who do participate.
 - Kids who are at risk because of poverty and racial inequality need the proven benefits of OST programs to succeed.
- Women who utilize quality out of school time care have fewer absences from work and have a better income.
 - Families benefit by reduced costs freeing up a significant part of their hard-earned income to pay for housing, food, and medical care.
- Health and well-being of Native American youth in Oregon, like their non-tribal counterparts, have a great need for effective programs to create positive shifts in knowledge, self-esteem, and cultural identity as well as mental health, substance abuse, healthy relationships, and violence/bullying.

What is a Children’s Service District?

- Examples of Children’s Services include, but are not limited to early childhood, after school & summer programs, which may include culture, arts & music, health & well-being, technology, and development of skills services for children & youth.
- This is a new tool to provide local funding for Children’s Services that occur outside of school time.
- How big is a Children’s Service District? As large or as small as the community wants it to be. The boundary could be a neighborhood, a town, part of a county, a whole county, or parts of multiple counties.
- Communities that are uninterested are under no obligation to form a Children’s Service District, just like they are not obligated to form an irrigation special district under existing law.

How is a Children’s Service District Formed?

To establish a Children’s Service District to fund one or more services for children outside of school time, a community must:

1. File a petition to form the district in the county in which it would be located including a proposed permanent rate limit for operating taxes sufficient to support the services
2. The petition must be signed by either 10% of registered voters within the proposed district boundary or a minimum of 100 registered voters within the proposed district boundary, whichever is greater
3. If enough signatures are gathered and filed with the applicable county, the petition is voted on by all registered voters within the proposed district boundary. Board members would be elected at the same time
4. If passed by the voters within the proposed district boundary, a Children’s Service District is formed.

Who Supports the Need for Children’s Service Districts?

◆ SB 299A has bi-partisan and bi-cameral support. Passed the Senate 20-10-0-0 ◆

Forest Grove School Board	Former State Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer	Alexander Diaz-Rios – PCC Board of Directors
NW Regional Education Services District	Christen Sacco – Tualatin City Councilor	Tom Hughes – former Metro Pres. & Hillsboro Mayor
Lisa Allen & Jaci Spross – Hillsboro School Board	Sean Garland – Sherwood City Councilor	Native STAND – OHSU-PSU School of Public Health
Lianne Thompson – Clatsop County Commissioner	Neighbors For Kids – Lincoln County	Greg Malinowski – former WashCo Commissioner



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