



May 4, 2021

Marty Wilde, Chair  
House Committee on General Government  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Wilde, Vice-Chairs Leif and Lively, and Members of the Committee,

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (THPRD) is a special park and recreation service district funded primarily by property taxes and program fees. Its service area spans the City of Beaverton and many unincorporated areas of eastern Washington County, including Aloha and North Bethany. The district has won numerous awards for the quality of its programs, facilities, and financial management.

THPRD wholeheartedly supports the intent of SB 299. We believe it is critical to increase access to quality out of school time experiences, especially those that are culturally-relevant and culturally-specific, to ensure that all children have the opportunity to not just survive but thrive. However, we do have concerns about the extent to which racial equity was a consideration in the development and advocacy of SB 299.

Our values as a board are centered in racial equity and, as a board, we want to stand behind legislation that is shaped and guided by BIPOC communities. While we do not see anything in the bill that would preclude an equitable approach to the support of children in our community, specifically children of color, we also do not see anything that requires it. We strongly believe that any efforts to support our community need to be done as a result of listening to the needs expressed by our community. For us, this means a seat at the table from the very beginning of the process for the people who too often aren't invited.

Lastly, we recognize that the creation of a children's service district is done so by the will of the community – 100 electors or 10% of the electors, whichever is greater – but we are unclear to what extent that this will actually engage the BIPOC community and if this mechanism is centered in racial equity. Additionally, the bill states that the children's service district "will select the children's services programs that, after a competitive process conducted by the district, are to receive funding from the district." Again, we are unclear if this process will be racially equitable. We would want to look to our friends and neighbors in the BIPOC community for their guidance on how best to do this work. Due to those concerns and our hopes for future efforts around this legislation, we cannot support SB 299 this session.

Sincerely,

Ashley Hartmeier-Prigg  
THPRD Board President

Tya Ping  
THPRD Board Secretary

Heidi Edwards  
THPRD Board Secretary Pro-Tem

Wendy Kroger  
THPRD Board Member

Felicita Monteblanco  
THPRD Board Member