



February 27, 2023

To: Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Scharf and Nguyen, and Members of the Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

RE: HB 3235 – Support

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Scharf, Vice Chair Nguyen, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Creeana Bort, I am a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, and I represent the NAYA Action Fund located in Portland, OR. Founded by the community, for the community, the NAYA Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a mission to expand political advocacy and build electoral power in partnership with the Native community. The NAYA Action Fund provides tools to shape public policy, cultivate leadership, and elect's champions for issues impacting Native people. Our vision of systemic change is youth-centered, family-driven, and elder guided. I write in support of House Bill 3235.

HB 3235 would create the Oregon Kids' Credit, a refundable tax credit of \$1,200 for each child living within a low-income household or within a working family. This Oregon-specific tax credit would help provide financial support to roughly half a million Oregonians. The tax credit is aimed to support and uplift our most vulnerable populations, the low and middle-income families that are already rent-burdened, struggling to afford childcare and other basic needs. The Oregon Kids' Credit would help reduce racial disparities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and other children of color by creating an economic prosperity opportunity. The Oregon Kids' Credit would benefit children of every racial and ethnic group in the state; estimates by the Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCP) suggest that Black, Indigenous, and Latino children would disproportionately benefit due to populations experiencing hardships at a higher rate than their white counterparts.

There are several examples from the COVID-19 pandemic that provides for a better understanding of how tax credits impact vulnerable families. In 2021, when the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) was temporarily expanded due to the pandemic, nearly 9 in every 10 low-income Oregon families receiving the CTC spent those dollars on basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, or utilities. The Oregon Kids' Credit would similarly help these families afford the same fundamental needs. During the expansion, we say child poverty nationwide dropped faster than any other point in U.S. history. When the federal expansion ended, an estimated 190,000 Oregon children lost access to the Kids' credit – causing an economic downturn for many Oregon families. The Oregon Kids' Credit aims to create a similar program, helping Oregonians rise and stay out of poverty.

When making decisions regarding the children of Oregon, think of the impacts on the next seven generations. The impact of your decisions will have generational impacts. I urge you to consider what it would look like for families struggling to be met with relief rather than fear and help create a future where barriers are diminished and accessibility to prosperity is attainable. On behalf of the NAYA Action Fund, we urge your support of HB 3235.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Creana Bort". The signature is enclosed in a thin black rectangular box.

Creana Bort
Policy and Advocacy Organizer