

**Testimony of Oregon Community Foundation on HB 3198**  
*From Mary Louise McClintock, Senior Education Strategy and  
 Policy Advisor, Oregon Community Foundation*

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson and Wright, Members of the House Committee on Education:

As Oregon's largest statewide foundation, we are deeply alarmed that more than half of Oregon third graders are not reading at benchmark, and that students from communities of color and low-income households face pronounced barriers when it comes to access to strong reading strategies. Action is urgently needed to address our state's profound literacy crisis, and we applaud you, Governor Kotek and her team and the many advocates who have been working hard this session to craft a better approach to ensuring that all of Oregon's children have equitable access to science-based literacy curricula as well as teachers trained to deploy them.

In particular, we strongly support the amendments to add funding for literacy programs reaching children birth to age 5 in community settings and through the federally-recognized tribes. OCF has invested in community-based early literacy strategies for nearly 25 years. Programs such as Reach Out and Read (delivered during well-child visits), Raising a Reader, Juntos Aprendemos and Early Words are known for effective and engaging approaches to supporting parents and early care and learning providers in promoting children's early literacy and language development. It is imperative that we strengthen school-based literacy instruction, but brain science also tells us that the years from birth to kindergarten are the time to lay a strong foundation for development of reading skills – to cultivate a love of books and reading in very young children and to help parents and caregivers learn how to share books, words, rhymes and songs with children from birth. Children who have these experiences are more likely to be ready to learn to read when they reach school.

Thank you for your leadership on these issues, and please consider Oregon Community Foundation to be a partner and resource.

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**PORTLAND**  
 1221 SW YAMHILL ST.  
 SUITE 100  
 PORTLAND, OR 97205  
 (503) 227-6846

**BEND**  
 15 SW COLORADO AVE.  
 SUITE 220  
 BEND, OR 97702  
 (541) 382-1170

**EUGENE**  
 44 W BROADWAY  
 SUITE 426  
 EUGENE, OR 97401  
 (541) 431-7099

**MEDFORD**  
 818 W EIGHTH ST.  
 MEDFORD, OR 97501  
 (541) 773-8987

**SALEM**  
 530 CENTER ST. NE  
 SUITE 230  
 SALEM, OR 97301  
 (503) 779-1927

**OREGONCF.ORG**

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