



The Dalles	Hood River
1113 Kelly Ave.	965 Tucker Rd.
The Dalles, OR 97058	Hood River, OR 97031
541-296-8118	541-386-6665
nextdoorinc.org	info@nextdoorinc.org

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, members of the committee. My name is Karin Tauscher and I am the Program Manager for Four Rivers Healthy Families, which serves Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler Counties. I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight and share my support for SB 5506.

Healthy Families Oregon is a powerful tool to support Oregon's babies and their families. Our home visiting model is unique in our focus on parent-infant attachment. We support parents, one on one, to build strong, healthy relationships with their babies, we empower parents to solve their own problems in healthier ways, building a better future for them and their children. We all know that children's school success relies on a healthy home environment, so the work that we do with families really impacts the future school success of today's infants and toddlers.

But Healthy Families staff are doing this important work for pay that is still not at parity with other similar jobs. Our staff are changing people's lives in profound ways, every day. They deserve to be compensated with a wage that allows them to live their lives without needing to access the same resources we connect our program families with!

We are doing this important work without adequate staffing support at the state level. Other programs of our size around the country have anywhere from 4 and 8 full-time dedicated staff to administer the program. We have one. I believe Oregon can do better than this.

And we are doing this important work without a statewide data system. It's been 8 years since we've had one, and this lack has created more work for all Healthy Families staff- we spend hours that we could be spending supporting more families, on tasks that could take minutes in an adequate data system. It is critically important for us to be able to efficiently collect and analyze our data, so we can show the outcomes of our work to you, the legislature, our other funders, and our accrediting organization, Healthy Families America.

For all these reasons I urge you to make investments now in Oregon's infants and toddlers by supporting Healthy Families Oregon's request for a \$15 million funding increase, so that we can increase pay for all HFO staff, acquire a statewide database that we need in order to maintain our national accreditation, and increase staffing at the state level with 4 additional positions to provide adequate support to the HFO statewide network.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Karin Tauscher, M.A.

Program Manager, Four Rivers Healthy Families

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