

February 19, 2025

TO: House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
FROM: Grace Fortson, Our Children Oregon
SUBJECT: Support for HB 3179

Chair Sosa, Vice-Chair Chaichi and Osborne, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Grace Fortson, I am the Policy and Advocacy Manager with Our Children Oregon (OCO). OCO is a statewide nonprofit committed to whole child wellbeing through the Children's Agenda- a comprehensive legislative agenda created and supported by our over 135 member organizations across the state.

HB 3179 is a fantastic way to ensure more financial stability for Oregonians. Research demonstrates that "effects of poverty on physiologic and neurobiologic development are likely central to poverty-related gaps in academic achievement and the well-documented lifelong effects of poverty on physical and mental health."¹ Support for HB 3179 now gives families more financial stability to support their children meaning decreased need for costly education and health interventions later.

With historic price increases from Oregon's primary utilities in recent years, many members of my community are expressing concerns about their ability to maintain warm homes. One of my friends with chronic illness suffers exacerbated joint pain in cold weather. Unfortunately, due to costs, they are unable to keep their home warm enough to avoid increased pain in the

¹ [https://www.academicpedsjnl.net/article/S1876-2859\(16\)00026-7/fulltext](https://www.academicpedsjnl.net/article/S1876-2859(16)00026-7/fulltext)

winter. Instead, they must resort to using a heating pad for an hour every morning just to achieve full range of motion in their hands.

We must also contextualize the rapidly increasing utility prices with the broader financial realities of Oregonians. 50% of Oregon's renting families are rent burdened, meaning they spend more than one third of their income on rent. Additionally, close to a fifth of Oregon's children are experiencing food insecurity². At the end of the day, Oregonians can not afford further, frivolous price increases on basic necessities like light and heat, especially without adequate time to prepare..

In order to support children and families in their health, learning, and overall well being, I implore you to vote yes on HB 3179.

Thank you,

Grace Fortson, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Our Children Oregon

View the [2025 Children's Agenda](#)

² <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>