

March 20, 2025

TO: Joint Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Grace Fortson, Our Children Oregon

SUBJECT: Support for the Children's Agenda and endorsed measures

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith,
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 more than 135 member organizations across the state.

[This year's Children's Agenda](#) includes vital legislation to support families and children both in the present and in the future. The agenda includes policy covering housing, tax credits, nurse home-visiting, educator diversification, and more. Beyond the agenda, OCO has also chosen to endorse over [20 additional bills](#) to support thriving Oregonian children. Please see our website for the complete lists, or reach out and we can send them directly if your office does not already have them. At a time when so much federal funding is in question, it may seem brash to advocate that not a few of these bills, but ALL of them get funded.

In times of uncertainty, it is our responsibility to ensure protections for the most vulnerable among us. I don't think it's a controversial statement to make that we are indeed in uncertain times. I am grateful and proud to hear that Oregon is not making any pre-emptive cuts based on speculation on what

might happen in DC. We cannot send the message that Oregon is willing to sacrifice the most critical basic services all Oregonians rely on. We also urge you to prepare for any coming economic downturn or federal funding reductions by doing what we know works to keep families stable: strategically investing in our communities and giving Oregonians more opportunities to thrive.

That is exactly what the Children’s Agenda does. Our top priorities include the Child Care Package, Oregon’s Relief Nurseries, Momnibus, Rent Stabilization Policy Improvement Bill, Strengthening the EITC, School-based Mental Health, several food security bills, and home-visiting legislation. Now is the time to be bold and ensure that all Oregonians, especially our youth, have the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you,

Grace Fortson, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Our Children Oregon

View the [2025 Children’s Agenda](#)