



February 21, 2017

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance, we respectfully request your support for Cover All Kids- SB 558.

Oregon is an innovator and a national leader, implementing bipartisan solutions that are improving health. We envision pragmatic yet impactful policies that have the potential to strengthen the health of thousands of Oregonians who remain uninsured and underinsured. While coverage gaps have declined through recent federal and state health reform efforts, there are thousands of Oregonians — roughly one in 10 — who are uninsured. These gaps disproportionately impact rural Oregonians, communities of color, immigrant children and adults, women, LGBTQ people, people with chronic conditions and low-wage working families.

Health insurance coverage is one of the single most effective ways to ensure that children receive the preventative health and medical care they need to thrive in school and life. **In Oregon, 2 percent of low-income children do not have any medical coverage even if income eligible.** This means that uninsured children must delay or go without essential doctor visits and medications.

SB 558 extends the Oregon Health Plan to all children residing in Oregon up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line. This extension will ensure that all children have access to the health care services they need to be successful in school and throughout their lives. Additionally, SB 558 guarantees culturally competent outreach to newly eligible children and their families.

The future of healthy and thriving children depends on timely and preventative health care. Access to health coverage results in lower high school dropout rates and an increase in college attendance and completion. SB 558 ensures that on day one of school all children come into class healthy and ready to learn.

Oregon needs to take the next step and extend healthcare coverage to all children. The Oregon Health Equity Alliance supports SB 558 because no child deserves to suffer.

We hope that you will join us in support of Cover All Kids- SB 558.

Sincerely,

Kayse Jama

Co-chair of OHEA

Amira Streeter

Co-chair of OHEA