



March 25, 2019

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

RE: Support for HB 3180 -2

Children First for Oregon urges support of HB 3180 -2. With the proposed amendment this bill pulls together the recommendations from the Interim Work Group on Child Abuse Intervention and Prevention. We appreciate the approaches in this bill to address specific gaps in child abuse intervention and prevention services in Oregon.

Children First represents the interests of Oregon's nearly 875,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. Through the development of the Children's Agenda we work with our more than 110 partner organizations to identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children. The concepts in HB 3180 -2 are part of the 2019 Children's Agenda.

In addition to Children First's work with the Children's Agenda and Oregon Foster Youth Connection, which are the programs you may be most familiar with, we are also the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count grantee for Oregon. In that role, we track and report on child well-being measures, publish data briefs, and publish annual county data profiles on 21 indicators of child-wellbeing.

We support the funding for the Oregon Child Abuse Prevalence Study (OCAPS) and we strongly recommend OCAPS as a viable, credible option to move the state forward toward obtaining better data on child abuse rates. This will help us inform our understanding of the current prevalence and challenges around child abuse, and in the longer-term help us track and evaluate child abuse prevention efforts.

This bill would also increase state funding for Child Abuse Intervention Centers (CAICs) to support more children in Oregon to access forensic interviews, family advocacy, and child abuse medical assessment from providers with the specific expertise needed to allow them to begin healing. And finally, the bill would add staff to help with child abuse prevention curriculum.

We all hope for a world where there is no child abuse, but that is not the current reality. We believe that we all need to work together to elevate the importance of child abuse prevention efforts including strengthening programs that help by economically stabilizing families, enacting policies and funding programs to provide stable housing, universally offering home visiting, and increasing access to mental health services, substance use treatments, parenting



education, and other prevention programs. As Children First and our partners advocate for systemic prevention programs, we need to support the children who experience child abuse today. CAICs are an essential component of that support.

CAICs intervene and reduce trauma, giving kids a better chance at a happy, healthy adulthood. 24 CAICs serve all 36 counties and require local buy-in to form and lead each community's child abuse response. They have strong partnerships with law enforcement, child welfare, schools, medical providers, and community-based nonprofits. CAICs are poised for increased services and growth, and want to serve more kids. For a stronger future, Oregon needs strong CAICs. The funding request in HB 3178 will help CAICs provide the services and care our children need and deserve.

We also need to have a better idea of the prevalence rates of child abuse versus report rates of child abuse and neglect to better understand the problem, and to measure the impact of intervention and prevention strategies. The value of OCAPS is the ability to get to prevalence rates so that we really know the extent of the child abuse prevention strategies and programs needed to address the problem.

Thank you very much for your attention and service. We request your support of HB 3180 -2.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director