



March 13, 2019

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

RE: Support for HB 3179

Children First for Oregon urges support of HB 3179. HB 3179 would provide 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.

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. HB 3179 is 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.

Children First closely tracked the Interim Work Group on Child Abuse Intervention and Prevention, and appreciate the attempts in this bill and others being heard today to address specific gaps in child abuse intervention and prevention services in Oregon.

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 really 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. We appreciate all the data work that the Department of Human Services is doing around analyzing the reports that come into the Child Abuse Hotline. At a recent legislative hearing it was interesting to hear about how they are identifying risk factors to segment the reports coming into the hotline, and how that data will help them prioritize investigations with a goal of targeting those reports where children are at the highest risk of abuse and neglect. However, that data is based on reports, and 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 strongly request your support of HB 3179 to establish baseline and tracking data on child abuse rates in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director