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February 21, 2017

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

Portland Jobs with Justice respectfully requests and strong urges your support for Cover All Kids-SB 558, which both extends the Oregon Health Plan to all children residing in Oregon up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line and ensures culturally competent outreach for the program to newly eligible children in order to ensure that all Oregon children have health insurance.

Portland Jobs with Justice is coalition of over 120 faith, labor, community, and student organizations, as well as thousands of individual activists taking action for workers rights and economic justice, through an intersectional racial and gender justice lens. We work to defend the rights of all working people, and to preserve civil and economic rights for all members of the community. We fight for the right to a decent standard of living, the right to job security, and the right to organize.

We need to make sure that our kids, especially those from marginalized communities who are most in need, are as prepared as possible to succeed in high school and college so they are equipped to find good, family wage jobs doing work that they care about. Health insurance coverage is one of the single most effective ways to ensure that children receive the preventive health and medical care they need to thrive in school and life. Insured kids are 9.7% less likely to drop out of high school and 5.5% more likely to graduate from college. Ensuring that all kids are covered means providing them the best opportunity to thrive in their education.

Through access to health care and improved educational outcomes, SB 558 also means stronger economic outcomes for families and for our state. Studies show that Medicaid-eligible children have higher incomes later in life and were more likely to surpass their families' economic status as adults. That means higher incomes, which is good for families and for our state's economy. It also means higher tax contributions, which is good for our state's budget.

We believe that you will do the right thing and support Cover All Kids-SB 558 you to the right to ensure that all kids in Oregon have health insurance, and so have the most opportunity possible for success in school and in life.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Pei Wu", enclosed within a large, loopy oval scribble.

D Pei Wu
Executive Director
Portland Jobs with Justice