

# Fostering Hope Initiative

Children. Adults. Families. Neighbors.

Dear Senator Gelser & Members of the Committee

For the record my name is Jim Seymour. I am the executive director of Catholic Community Services of the Mid-Willamette Valley and Central Coast. Catholic Community Services is the collective impact backbone organization for the Fostering Hope Initiative. I am here today to testify on behalf of eight local non-profit organizations in support of S.B. 964.

Senate Bill 964 – ***The Strong Families Resilient Neighborhoods Tax Credit*** has great potential to address the acute need for sustainable funding for innovation that works. The credit we propose will be used to enable three communities across the State to develop neighborhood-based, collective impact projects to strengthen families and build more resilient neighborhoods with rigorously defined success measures that include:

- Substantial and sustainable reduction in child maltreatment
- Reduction in foster care placements
- Increases in school attendance and reduction in chronic absenteeism
- Substantial, sustainable improvements in children’s physical, dental and mental health.

*OHSU’s Center for Evidenced Based Policy* conducted research that looked at every child, 5 years old and younger that entered foster care over a ten year period. When they looked at the data by census tract they found there were some census tracts where the incidence of foster care placement was vastly higher. In fact, there are Oregon neighborhoods where children are ten times more likely to experience maltreatment and end up in foster care.

The same research indicates that a child being raised by a single parent, living in poverty, that dropped out of high school, and has a history of mental health or addiction problems is ten times more likely to experience maltreatment and end up in foster care.

*We know the neighborhoods where children are at highest risk of experiencing maltreatment and we know how to identify the families most in need of support to protect and nurture their children.*

There are communities across the State that are developing innovative strategies for strengthening families and building more resilient neighborhoods.

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One of those strategies is known as the Fostering Hope Initiative's Strong Families Resilient Neighborhoods project. It was developed by eight Marion County not-for-profit organizations with support from Salem Foundation, Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Kaiser Permanente, Harvard University's Frontiers of Innovation learning collaborative, the Marion County Health Department and the Oregon Department of Human Resources, and others.

S.B. 964 will provide a tax credit for Oregonians that want to invest in promising strategies like the Fostering Hope Initiative's Strong Families Resilient Neighborhoods project. I urge you to support the bill.

Sincerely,

James T. Seymour

Executive Director of Catholic Community Services

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