



March 21, 2019

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard, and Members of the Committee,

RE: Support for SB 1/SB 221

Children First for Oregon urges support of SB 1/SB 221, the companion bills to move forward the recommendations for the Children and Youth with Specialized Needs Workgroup.

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. We work with our more than 110 partner organizations to identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children. SB 1/SB 221 are on the 2019 Children's Agenda.

The children who are at the center of these bills are truly our most vulnerable children who are usually involved with multiple public systems and have acute needs. These children are slipping between the cracks or being passed from agency to agency, and we need to do better for them.

While we did not sit on the Children and Youth with Specialized Needs Workgroup, many of our partners did, and we tracked the progress of the work. It was an impressive collaboration to have such a diverse set of stakeholders come together and develop consensus recommendations.

This effort requires an investment, but it is a necessary investment both in infrastructure and programs. In particular, we were glad to see the investment in in-home services to strengthen families to support the successful implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act and the support for therapeutic foster families.

Thank you very much for your attention and service. We ask for your support of these critical bills.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director