

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to provide comment to the Joint Committee on Student Success for the public hearing on Thursday, April 11 regarding House Bill 2019.

The committee's recommendation for roughly \$400 million in new investments in early childhood is historic. Oregon is in an early childhood crisis, and the time is now for us to invest big in the collected solutions that work: child care, early learning, and partnerships with families!

My name is Bridget Cooke and I am the co-founder and Executive Director of Adelante Mujeres (Women Rise Up), a culturally specific organization (CSO).

We have been serving Latina women and their entire families in Forest Grove and western Washington County since 2002, more than 17 years. We empower low-income Latina women and their families through education and enterprise (micro business) programs to ensure active participation and leadership in the wider community.

As a white woman leading a CSO, I am acutely aware of my privilege growing up in Yamhill County where I was safe from civil war, domestic violence and starvation. Most of the women and families we meet have survived all three of these horrific facts plus treacherous journeys to find peace in our beautiful state of Oregon. Their courage inspires me to be the best ally and accomplice I can be to advance equity practices in education and in all levels of civic life.

Education is the golden ticket out of poverty. I have seen how our under resourced programs have made such a big impact. With the passage of HB 2019 and the brave hearts in this legislature, Oregon will be poised to meet the economic challenges of the future. With more secure funding, our proven results based programs will flourish with success.

Everyone in our country is struggling right now. I am proud to call myself an Oregonian when this historic investment becomes a role model to other states. Let's rise up to be the equity in education leaders that I know we can be.

I trust you as our elected officials will support our children and families by voting and advocating for complete funding of HB 2019. Please advance equity in our Education system!

Thank you,

Bridget Cooke

Sincerely,  
Bridget Cooke  
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