

April 24, 2019

Oregon House Human Services and Housing Committee

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chairs Noble and Sanchez, Representatives Helt, Meek, Mitchell, Schouten, Williams, and Zika

Investing in our youth today is the most economically astute investment we can make, as the saying goes, “a stitch in time saves nine”, and this could not be truer for supporting children that are on the margin. As an individual that has worked in affordable housing and has created housing for homeless people, I have seen firsthand how expensive this lack of fundamental support becomes for all of us. These underserved children as adults become far more costly with incarceration, homelessness and the necessary expanded supportive services required to stabilize them down the road. The smart investment is in prevention for underserved youth of today with programs that enrich, protect and assist children that are in need of our support. Children are not able to advocate on their own behalf and as a result are often underfunded and under supported. We must prioritize today’s youth as they are worthy of having an equal opportunity to healthcare, education, enrichment outside school, and the right start in life to be productive members of society. Beyond the economics, it is simply the most fundamental thing we as a society should prioritize – these are our children and they are a pure reflection of us as a society and what we value in our community. I support SB 543!

Thank you,

Stefanie Kondor