

February 4, 2021

Chair Senator Ginny Burdick, Senator Brian Boquist, Senator Lynn Findley, Senator Rob Wagner, Senator Chuck Riley;

I fully support SB299, which forms a children's special district to support children's services that are seriously lacking in our communities. This bill does not cost the state a dime. It will allow the collection of signatures to allow a vote on a measure proposed by people in our own communities. Put this decision to those it will impact the most, the voters.

As a Hillsboro School Board Director, I see the issues firsthand when our community has limited options for the programs this bill will provide.

COVID has only intensified the divide between those who can afford care and those who cannot. Now with the economy and schools gradually welcoming students back, it is imperative that parents and guardians have their children and youth supported both during school and non-school time. Early learning, after school, and summer programs are key to allowing parents and guardians to have peace of mind while they are working; they need to know that their children and youth are having positive experiences. Studies have shown that if children have positive adult role models and strong relationships with at least one caring adult, their future is much more secure and positive.

Women have been hit disproportionately hard during the pandemic, especially with Comprehensive Distance Learning, many of them leaving employment, which hurts the economy as well. Local funding mechanisms need to be made available to implement and expand programs for children and youth. This bill makes it possible to provide the support families need.

Regards,  
Jaci Spross  
Concerned Parent  
Hillsboro School Board Director