

Oregon House General Government Committee

Support for SB 299 Authorizing the formation of The Children's Service Districts

From: Claire Morgan, Secretary  
Washington County Kids  
Elementary teacher, retired

Dear Chair Wilde, Vice Chairs Leif and Lively, and Representatives Valderama and Zika,

Oregon children matter to all of us. The years in a child's life before age eighteen are a formation period for the adult who then lives, plays, works, and shops in Oregon, consequently, contributing to the collective enhancement of all of our lives. During those formative years, the more we expand a child's knowledge base, confidence, and address his/her needs, the greater the benefits realized by the then productive adult.

Attending to each child's physiological and safety necessities obligate us as a society to provide after school, summer and early childhood safe havens. As a former primary educator for 32 years, I worried that several of my students had insufficient and inadequate care after school and in the summertime. If a child is scared or is unable because of youth or inexperience to manage selfcare, his/her confidence deteriorates, and trauma ensues. As is stated in *Science Daily*: [Bold print is theirs.]

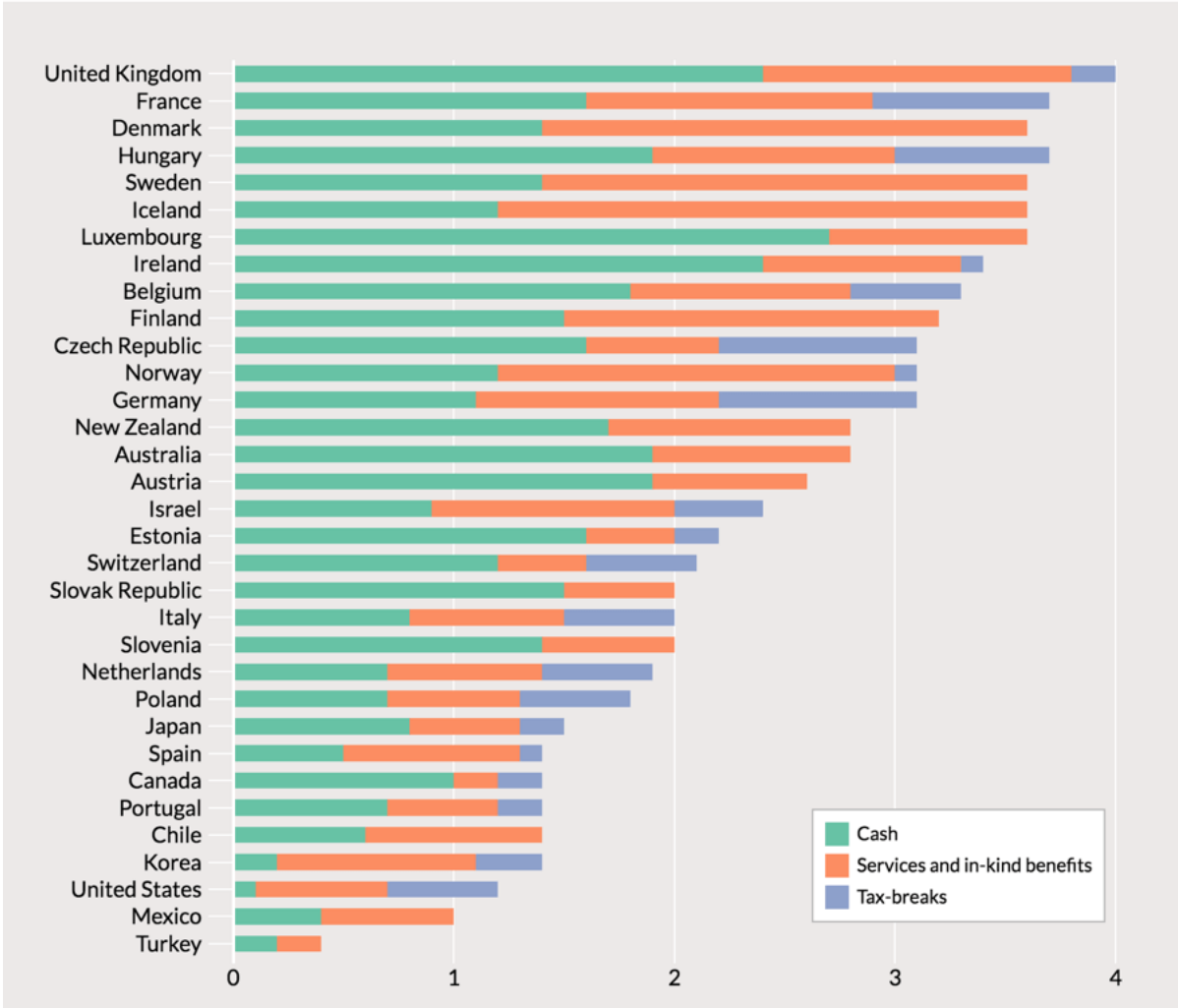
A majority of social workers surveyed believe **children** should be at least 12 before being **left home alone** four hours or longer, and they are more likely to consider a **home-alone** scenario as **neglect** if a **child** is injured while **left** unsupervised. (October 25, 2019)

If a child's safety and physiological essentials are met, he/she then yearns for a sense of connection, of belonging, and a feeling of respect. This develops self-assurance and courage. The child can begin building on her/his own particular contributions which will be made to our society. I have observed children beam with delight upon completion of their own creation of an original design or apparatus. Why not have this process continue?

Where is the resolve to require a solid formation period (age 1 to 18 years) for our future adults? What is more important? Do we care?

Please note the following:

**The United States spends less on families and children than other advanced countries**  
 Public expenditure on families and children as a percentage of GDP, 2013



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD Family Database <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>.  
 Note: Data from 2013, or in some cases latest available.



The Pandemic has created a strong urgency for this assistance. Many excellent programs exist for after school, summer and early childhood care, but we need more programs for more children. The programs we now have need stable funding, so the directors do not have to agonize about budgets from year to year. Let us all help.

Please advance The Children’s Service Districts Bill – SB 299. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.