



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA

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Oregon House Committee – Attn: Chair Rep. Marty Wilde, Rep. Gary Leif, Rep. John Lively, Rep. Andrea Valderrama, & Rep. Jack Zika

Oregon is challenged by a lack of success for many of our kids with one of the lowest graduation rates in the country. It is time to close this disparity that is holding so many youth back in our great state.

As a supporter of the Washington County Kids initiative, we urge you to support passing SB299, which will add children's service districts to the 28 currently allowed special districts and provide critically needed out of school youth development services to the County.

Our kids desperately need these important services:

- 92% of Washington County children who qualify for federal and state early childhood programs do not receive them
- 63% of K-12 Washington County kids do not have affordable, enrichment based after school programs available to them
- Additionally, 95% of K-12 Washington County kids do not have affordable, enrichment based summer programs available to them

Children without access to out of school programming fall behind an average of three years by 5th grade, which is leading to a growing middle school drop-out trend. Boys & Girls Clubs (and programs like it), help youth achieve academic success, build character/leadership skills, promote healthy and active lives, and support social and emotional growth. Our programs can employ teens and dive deeper with youth who are struggling with emotional and behavioral issues. In addition, we also provide healthy meals to our youth to reduce food insecurity. All of these services are provided through our Inukai Boys & Girls Club, serving the city of Hillsboro, where there continues to be a growing need for youth after school and summer programming.

These services also help families, as parents experience less absenteeism in the workforce knowing their children are in a safe, vibrant, affordable place during out of school hours. This also has a positive impact on the economy with a more stable workforce. Additionally, Boys & Girls Clubs benefit schools by supporting youth socially, emotionally, and academically by providing trauma informed care and addressing challenges that schools increasingly face on a daily basis.

Currently, funds are inadequate to support the programs needed in Washington County. SB299 would allow organizations like the Boys & Girls Clubs to scale across the county to serve the growing number of underserved families. Most youth based non-profits rely largely on philanthropic fundraising to serve youth; those resources are inadequate to meet the present and future need.

We sincerely urge you to pass this bill.

Creating Great Futures,

Terry E. Johnson
CEO