



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 22, 2021

To: [House Committee on Early Childhood](#)
Chair, Representative Karin Power
Vice-Chair, Representative Lisa Reynolds
Vice-Chair, Representative Jack Zika

Re: [HB 3073](#)– Early Learning and Childhood Authority – **Support**

As you see from the LWV *Positions* at the end of this testimony, the League supports Oregon’s ongoing efforts to provide early learning and early childhood services to children with the highest priority going first to children living in poverty and/or children diagnosed with special needs.

Since the inception of Early Learning’s statewide directives in 2011, legislation has developed into a more comprehensive system touching on most aspects of children younger than kindergarten. The current Early Learning Council [2021 update](#) the 2019 [Raise Up Oregon](#) and [prior reports to the Legislature](#) detail aspects of how Early Learning has evolved in Oregon over time, for those of you new to the Early Childhood Committee.

Within the 2019 Student Success Act, the Early Learning Account is allocated at least 20% of funds available through the new tax (CAT), thus creating a more stable source of funding for programs assisting Oregon’s youngest residents and creating more available “slots” to serve young children as shown in the [Education System Overview Feb 17 2021](#) (Early Learning slides 1-23).

[HB 3073](#) as initially drafted, changes the name of Early Learning Division to Early Learning Authority; establishes the Early Learning Authority as state agency that is separate from Department of Education (as it already is in many operational aspects) functioning under, and coordinated by, the Early Learning Council; prescribes expanded duties, functions, and powers of the Early Learning Authority, including administration of Employment Related Day Care; directs the Early Learning Division, Department of Education and Department of Human Services to develop and implement plans for seamless transfer of relevant duties, functions and powers, and to report on plans to appropriate interim committees of Legislative Assembly; revises the goals of the statewide early learning system; and modifies membership and duties of State Interagency Coordinating Council.

Oregon has done a fairly comprehensive job of breaking down silos between agencies in education, social services and health care to provide more of an “any door” approach for early identification of children needing early intervention as well as those qualifying for reduced out-of-pocket costs for childcare and early learning preschool programs. [HB 3073](#) is yet another positive legislative step in providing comprehensive services for young children. While the bill changes the Early Learning Division to the “Early Learning Authority” the LWVOR would support an amendment to consider the name “**Early Learning and Childhood Authority**” or “**Early Childhood Authority**” because the current and proposed functions address early childhood services that go beyond early learning.

Oregon’s Early Learning and Early Childhood programs have not developed in a vacuum. They have been funded, in part, by directed grants and policy guidance from the federal level that have shaped state early learning. However, no two states have exactly the same structure, and like Oregon, many continue to evolve. For those wishing more information on how Oregon compares, the June 2020 [Improving](#)

[Early Childhood Education Systems](#), the July 2020 [Making Sense of Governance in Early Childhood](#), and the December 2020 [50-State Comparison: Early Care and Education Governance](#) from the Education Commission of the States, considers early learning governance structures within various states and provides links to state web sites. In some states like Alabama, Georgia, Massachusetts and Washington, early childhood programs have been brought together in a dedicated agency.

In June 2020 Foresight Law+Policy published [Early Childhood Governance: Getting There from Here and Decision Guide](#) as a follow-up to a 2019 publication [Why the K-12 World Has Not Embraced Early Learning](#). We are fortunate that Oregon's legislators and the Oregon Education Department have indeed embraced early learning with needed funding and with coordination across silos. *Of course, the funding does not go far enough, many children who are eligible for services still do not receive them.* We commend Early Learning for continuing to combine federal and state funding sources to serve more kids.

As Oregon's Early Learning has continued to evolve, so too has the [Early Childhood Coalition](#) that includes more than 40 state and national organizations that work to advocate for young children and families. The [Children's Institute](#) serves as a coordinating member of the coalition and offers facilitation support. It is evident that those with direct service obligations to children support the changes in [HB 3073](#) as shown in a separate testimony letter.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation and for your ongoing work with early childhood issues.



Becky Gladstone
LWVOR President



Chris Vogel
LWVOR Education Policy Coordinator

The LWVOR Children at Risk *Position Statement* is based on a longitudinal 2013-2015 state and federal review as Oregon's children's services transitioned from those funded at the local level by separate County Commissions on Children and Families to a statewide oversight starting in 2011, [Children at Risk Study, LWVOR 2015](#). Concurrently, federal early childhood education grants resulted in similar changes across many states. LWVOR has continued to follow legislation, early learning hubs, the growing oversight of licensed day care, and continued guidance from the Early Learning Council.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the early years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies, programs, and funding at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of all children. These include:

- *Nutrition and food access for vulnerable children and families*
- *Access to affordable, safe, and stable housing*
- *Early screening (physical, dental, mental, and behavioral) for all children*
- *Early prenatal care and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental)*
- *Access to affordable, quality child care*
- *Access to early literacy and pre-school programs, including but not limited to Early Head Start and Head Start*
- *Programs for mental health and addictions treatment for parents*
- *Family support, including but not limited to home visiting, parenting classes, and family relief nurseries*

- *Comprehensive services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities*
- *Use of evidence-based practices in child welfare and foster care*
- *Programs to reduce poverty by providing parents with assistance in job training and education*
- *Policies and legislation to reduce racial or ethnic minority status inequities*

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that governments, at all levels, have a responsibility to oversee and coordinate a comprehensive network of services to maximize children's readiness to be successful in school while optimizing available resources. LWVOR supports policies, programs, and funding at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of all children. We believe that the early years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. LWV is fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Additionally, LWVUS believes quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children, with federally funded opportunities going first to children of poverty and/or with special needs. The League believes that the federal government should support the following: Early childhood education programs that include funding for parent education and involve child development, health, nutrition and access to other supportive services such as mental health care for all children and their families; Research that documents quality early childhood education programs; and Research that demonstrates the importance of linking state and local community partnerships with effective early childhood education programs and services.

Cc: Members of the [House Committee on Early Childhood](#)
 Chair, Representative Karin Power, Rep.KarinPower@oregonlegislature.gov
 Vice-Chair, Representative Lisa Reynolds, Rep.LisaReynolds@oregonlegislature.gov
 Vice-Chair, Representative Jack Zika, Rep.JackZika@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative John Lively, Rep.JohnLively@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Courtney Neron, Rep.CourtneyNeron@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Sheri Schouten, Rep.SheriSchouten@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Suzanne Weber, Rep.SuzanneWeber@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Boomer Wright, Rep.BoomerWright@oregonlegislature.gov

Members of the [Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education](#)
 Co-Chair, Senator Lew Frederick, Sen.LewFrederick@oregonlegislature.gov
 Co-Chair, Representative Susan McLain, Rep.SusanMcLain@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Senator Michael Dembrow, Sen.MichaelDembrow@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Senator Chuck Thomsen, Sen.ChuckThomsen@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Rep.TeresaAlonsoLeon@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Bobby Levy, Rep.BobbyLevy@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative E. Werner Reschke, Rep.EWernerReschke@oregonlegislature.gov
 Member, Representative Ricki Ruiz, Rep.RickiRuiz@oregonlegislature.gov

Governor Kate Brown; Gina Zejdlik, Deputy Chief of Staff, gina.zejdlik@oregon.gov
 Early Learning Division, Miriam.Calderon@state.or.us
 Early Learning Council, suemiller500@gmail.com
 Early Childhood Coalition, dana@childinst.org