



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 23, 2021

To: [House Committee on Education](#)
Chair, Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
Vice-Chair, Representative Courtney Neron
Vice-Chair, Representative Suzanne Weber

Re: [HB 2166-1](#)– Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program – **Support**

The League of Women Voters 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. LWVOR supports early screening (physical, dental, mental, and behavioral) for all children; early prenatal care and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental); and comprehensive services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities.

The “-1” amendment rewrites the original placeholder bill. [HB 2166-1](#).

[HB 2166-1](#) establishes the “**Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program**” as outlined at the end of this testimony. It will reduce disparities in the use of suspension and expulsion in early childhood care and education programs based on race, ethnicity, language, ability or any other protected class. Additionally, the Early Learning Division shall coordinate with the Oregon Health Authority to develop a plan for integrated mental and behavioral health and social and emotional supports for children and families. This \$5.8 million proposal in the Governor’s Recommended Budget is another positive step in protecting Oregon’s children and providing tools for caregivers, educators, and parents.

Behavioral issues are frequently the result of adverse childhood experiences or family systems stressed beyond coping. Rather than expulsion in early childhood care and education programs, these behaviors should be seen as a loud cry for help from a young child who may not have verbal or coping skills to do much more than “act out” asking for safety and security. Early childhood educators are in a position to observe and assist young children in need.

This session the [House Committee on Behavioral Health](#) is hearing [HB 2381](#) that would modify laws relating to youth suicide intervention and prevention to include children under 10 years of age. While it is sobering to know early childhood suicide rates are rising, it is important to identify earlier points of intervention. The [Senate Committee on Education](#) also considers elements of eliminating expulsion in early childhood care and education programs in [SB 236](#) addressing childhood educator skills enhancement and training, as well as infant-toddler early childhood mental health consultation, will help save lives and enhance quality of life.

National data shows that Black children, Native children, and children who experience disabilities are asked to leave at disproportionately higher rates than other children. These are the same cohorts that often have difficulty staying in school and graduating. Early identification and early intervention are critical, not expulsion.

Please support [HB 2166-1](#). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Becky Gladstone
LWVOR President



Chris Vogel
LWVOR Education Policy Coordinator

CC [Senate Committee on Education](#) regarding [SB 236](#) a somewhat parallel bill
Chair, Senator Michael Dembrow, Vice-Chair,
Senator Chuck Thomsen

[House Committee on Early Childhood](#)

Chair, Representative Karin Power
Vice-Chair, Representative Lisa Reynolds
Vice-Chair, Representative Jack Zika

[HB 2166-1](#) amendment is reproduced here for clarity

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PREVENTION

SECTION 1.

- (1) The **Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program** is established. The Early Learning Division shall administer the program as provided by this section.
- (2) The purposes of the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program are to:
 - (a) Reduce the use of suspension and expulsion in early childhood care and education programs; and
 - (b) Reduce disparities in the use of suspension and expulsion in early childhood care and education programs based on race, ethnicity, language, ability or any other protected class identified by the Early Learning Council by rule.
- (3) The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program shall achieve the purposes described in subsection (2) of this section by:
 - (a) Incorporating into early childhood care and education programs racial equity, trauma-informed principles and practices and strengths-based multitiered systems of support;
 - (b) Supporting the capacity of families, educators and early childhood care and education professionals to promote children's social emotional well-being and growth;
 - (c) Creating a source for early childhood care and education professionals to request technical assistance related to children's social emotional well-being and growth;
 - (d) Building capacity in communities to deliver technical assistance that supports:
 - Children's social emotional development;
 - Children's positive racial identity development;
 - Antibias practices in early childhood care and education programs; and
 - Inclusive practices in early childhood care and education programs;
 - Enhancing community-based supports for families that have a history of trauma, are involved in multiple systems of support or need connection to intervention services;
 - Providing early childhood care and education professionals with access to technical assistance to support the stability of placements in early childhood care and education programs; and
 - Developing and supporting practices that reduce the use of suspension or expulsion.
- (4) Under the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program, the Early Learning Division shall establish:
 - (a) Common definitions related to antibias practices in early childhood care and education;
 - (b) Common definitions related to inclusive practices in early childhood care and education;
 - (c) Common definitions and guidelines for early childhood care and education suspension and expulsion;
 - (d) Standards and guidelines for program administration and for the delivery of technical assistance services that are culturally responsive and that ensure technical assistance is implemented with a focus on antibias and inclusive practices;
 - (e) Requirements for knowledge, skills and competencies for technical assistance specialists and mental health consultants participating in the program, with a focus on racial equity, the science of child development, trauma-informed principles and practices, social emotional learning principles, antibias practices and inclusive practices;
 - (f) Standards for data collection and evaluation to assess the impacts of the program, including eliminating disparities in exclusionary practices based on race, ethnicity, language, ability or other protected classes; and
 - (g) Requirements that early childhood care and education programs certified or registered under ORS 329A.280 or 329A.330, or receiving public funding for early childhood care and education services, must request services from the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program when a young child in an early childhood care or education program is facing potential expulsion.
- (5) In support of the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program, the Early Learning Division shall coordinate with the Oregon Health Authority to develop a plan for integrated mental and behavioral health and social and emotional supports for children and families, including establishing a resource list of diverse, community-based mental health consultants to support the goals of the suspension and expulsion program.
- (6) The Early Learning Council may adopt any rules necessary for the administration of this section.