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Chair Michael Dembrow
Vice-Chair Chuck Thomsen
Members of the Senate Education Committee

RE: support SB 236 – Suspension and expulsion in early childhood care and education programs

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the Committee,

FACT Oregon is the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, designated Parent Training Information Center (PTI) serving families as they navigate Special Education services. Providing peer delivered support, training, and resources, we equip and empower families of youth experiencing disability to pursue whole, full lives in community.

For many families, their first engagement with community is finding and securing childcare and early learning opportunities for their child experiencing disability. Sadly, despite the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), too many experience bold-faced exclusion. If they are successful at getting in a program, students with disabilities are **more than twice** as likely to receive an out-of-school **suspension** (26%) as students without disabilities (12%)⁵. **Black preschool** children are **3.6 times** as likely to receive one or more out-of-school **suspensions** as their White peers.

SB 236 provides the data necessary to acknowledge and resources necessary to address the *preschool-to-prison pipeline* for our youngest students of color, and at the same time addresses that for students experiencing disability, *segregation begets segregation*. Despite the Least Restrictive Environment mandate included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), many students experience segregation right out of the gate. Success in an early learning environment is the beginning of what we call an *inclusive resume*, and with such, the likelihood of entering a general education kindergarten with non-disabled peers is greatly increased. From there you have a student on trajectory for graduation with a diploma and future employment in community.

We must ensure our youngest students that early learning opportunities will be accessible, welcoming, and inclusive places, where diversity is recognized, appreciated, and celebrated. We enthusiastically pursue this goal with fellow members of the Oregon Partners for Education Justice.

Thank you for your consideration,

Roberta Dunn, FACT Oregon

5 | U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2019, May). Data highlights on school climate and safety (2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection). Washington, DC: Author. Online at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf>