



**LatinoNetwork**  
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To: [House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services](#)

Re: HB 2991 Support Letter

Date: 2/20/2023

Latino Network was founded in 1996 by advocates for the needs of the growing Latinx community in Multnomah County. Since then, these grassroots beginnings have evolved into a continuum of services that support Latinx individuals, families, and communities. Our programs currently focus on education, advocacy & leadership, health & wellness, economic justice, youth empowerment & violence prevention, and arts & culture, engaging nearly 11,000 community members throughout Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties in the last year. We are the leading culturally-specific provider for Latinx youth, parent, and family services in the Portland area with the goal of serving the nearly 19% of Oregon's population who identify as Latinx or Hispanic.

Latino Network currently provides direct services to youth and families in Senate Districts 13 and 19-25 and House Districts 25, 37 and 42-50.

When it comes to early childhood engagement no Oregon county has sufficient capacity. This is both because of lack of physical locations for services and programs as well as a major workforce shortage.

Our systems of training and credentialing lack transparency and coordination with providers and employers of early childhood professionals. We have communities of leaders who want to get into this field and we need to make the process equitable, accessible and easy to use. This is especially true for Latinx, Black and other communities of color. It is critical that the workforce also reflect the diverse communities in Oregon to ensure all Oregon residents are given opportunities to have healthy thriving children and families.

The research and realities are clear, these vital upstream investments in the lives of our children, families and communities, should be standard practice for our state. Growing the workforce of bilingual and bicultural early learning professionals will take partnership from regulatory agencies, employers and community leaders.



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HB 2991 will help to set the table for long-term collaboration and ensure our regulatory framework supports growing the workforce of high quality professionals; instead of being an arduous process that impedes our ability to meet community needs. HB 2991 will invest in reform that is community driven, intentionally and authentically including community stakeholders to build a workforce pipeline process alongside key decision-makers in state governments. Our regulatory processes should lift up and reflect shared vision in rule making, research, training and ongoing professional development for the early childhood system.

We want to thank Representative Tran for her leadership, and we deeply appreciate all our partners who are prioritizing investment in early childhood education this legislative session.

Please support HB 2991