



Oregon moms and caregivers fighting for gender, economic, and racial justice.

To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
From: Family Forward Oregon
Date: 2/27/23
RE: In Support of HB 3235

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Scharf and Nguyen, and members of the committee:

My name is Kaitlin Gaffney, I am presenting testimony on behalf of Family Forward Oregon. Family Forward Oregon is a statewide organization that organizes mothers and caregivers to fight for economic justice. I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 3235, the Oregon Kids' Credit.

Family Forward works with mothers every day who tell us about the impossible financial positions they are in. The high cost of child care is unaffordable for many, forcing women out of the workforce. Women have felt the brunt of the economic recession caused by COVID, losing over 5 million jobs during the pandemic with women of color suffering the greatest of those losses. The soaring costs of housing, food, and other necessities only adds to the strain causing parents to have to choose between feeding their children or paying their rent. No parent should have to make these choices.

Congress's expansion of the federal Child Tax Credit proved to be a huge deal for families, lifting millions out of poverty in just its first month. Child poverty nationwide dropped faster than at any point in history. It was especially transformational for Black and brown families who disproportionately benefited from the expanded credit. These funds went to making sure families could afford the most basic necessities and ensure their children could thrive.

Since the expanded Child Tax Credit expired, food insecurity is on the rise, millions of children have been pushed back into poverty, and low wage workers continue to struggle with higher costs. Congress failed to take action to prevent this backslide into poverty for Oregon families but we have a real opportunity with the Oregon Kids' Credit to effectively and efficiently deliver resources to the families in the greatest need.

We've seen how cash policies provide a life-line for families with low incomes. When the federal CTC was temporarily expanded, nearly 9 in every 10 low-income Oregon families receiving the CTC spent those dollars on basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, or utilities. The Oregon Kids' Credit would help families who are struggling to make ends meet provide for their families. The Oregon Kids' Credit also gives us an opportunity to address racial disparities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and other children of color, with

estimates by the Oregon Center for Public Policy suggesting that BIPOC children would disproportionately benefit from this credit.

The pandemic made it abundantly clear that many families are in a very precarious situation. We must support each other during these difficult times. With the Oregon Kids' Credit we have an opportunity to decrease poverty and invest in families. We look forward to working with you to fight for families in our state that are struggling to make ends meet and we urge you to support HB 3235.

Thank you.



Kaitlin Gaffney
Policy and Campaigns Manager
Family Forward Oregon

