

Testimony of Oregon Community Foundation on HB 5013

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Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

Oregon Community Foundation urges your support for HB 5013, the Department of Early Learning and Care Budget.

Early care and learning has long been one of OCF's top priorities because we know that an investment in young children is an investment in the future well-being of our entire state. We know the Oregon legislature shares that view, and that that is one of the reasons for passage of legislation two years ago to create a new Department of Early Learning and Care. This is an exciting moment for Oregon, when we have the opportunity to ensure a strong foundation for the new department through continued and enhanced funding for its pivotal programs and the infrastructure to deliver them in partnership with communities and community-based organizations.

In particular, we urge your support for ongoing funding in the DELC budget for community-based parenting education programs that support and engage parents as their children's first and most important teachers. Together with foundation partners, OCF has been investing in high quality parenting programs for more than 20 years – investments that have increased access to parenting education and built a statewide infrastructure. We have learned through our grantmaking about the power of parenting education to build family resilience, strengthen parent-child bonds and equip parents to prepare their children for success in school and life. Parenting classes and workshops are a strategy to support families who may not access to other programs, especially in the critical birth to three years. Since the 2019-2021 biennium State Student Success Act dollars have been amplifying philanthropic funding and have significantly strengthened and expanded the current network of programs. Today you also will be receiving testimony from two leaders of regional parenting education organizations on the impact of state dollars.

I'm excited to share with you the news that the State of Oregon recently received approval from the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to draw down Children's Health Insurance Program dollars for the statewide early childhood parenting education program and infrastructure via a 75%/25% matching formula that will mean a quadrupling of DELC dollars – making it even more important to keep funding levels steady or increasing.

Thank you for your commitment to Oregon's youngest children and their families, and please consider Oregon Community Foundation to be a partner and resource in this important work.