

Written testimony in support of HB 5013 from Suey Linzmeier- my oral testimony was cut short.

March 2, 2023

To the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

I write to you as the Executive Director of Head Start of Yamhill County (HSYC). Our program is also a member of the Oregon Head Start Association.

I support of HB 50-13. This bill funds *essential* early childhood programs overseen by the newly established Department of Early Learning and Care.

I have been in this field since 1980 and I fully respect and support Alyssa and her team's work.

Funding *and* alignment are key if we are to continue to make progress to support families, and their children birth to 5, to be ready for the next chapter of their lives.

The Oregon Head Start Association supports Oregon PreKindergarten (OPK) Early Head Start and preschool programs. HSYC has federal Head Start & Early Head Start and State OPK Head Start & (and now) Early Head Start funding. With this funding we can provide 510 kids & families prenatally to age 5 a variety of program options that meet their needs from homebase including intensive weekly home visits, to full-year, full day services for those who need one of Oregon's highest quality comprehensive early care and education opportunities.

Head Start programs provide home visiting services and a high level of individualized assistance to eligible families. We follow all the federal Head Start requirements and are regularly monitored for compliance and quality. Head Start has been in Oregon since 1987 – and has a strong track record of success. Our program focuses on the parent as the child's first teacher, and we support and encourage parents to participate in their children's lives not only from birth to 5, but throughout life. We provide family engagement, self-sufficiency, and parent education opportunities AND we employ and train parents to be successful through mentoring & community training, and college certificates and degrees. Typically, around 40% of our staff are current or past HS parents and grandparents. I'm one of those grandmas!

Over 50 years of research shows that participants in Head Start program are more likely to read by the 3rd grade, graduate high school, and receive a post-secondary degree than other children experiencing poverty.

As the new department is established it is **critical** they have funding to support programs in the system, and to work to align and ensure quality results from these programs. This budget will

help with this process.

This budget also helps early childhood programs address the costs of inflation, and workforce and facility shortages which are very drastic at this time in history. Our program is understaffed by over eight classrooms worth of staff- when we can pay our employees a living wage, we can hire and retain staff and thus consistently care for all of the children eligible for and enrolled in our program.

We strongly support the allocation of \$391 million for OPK Early Head Start and the preschool programs, which includes a \$25.6 million investment for program stabilization.

The Oregon Head Start Association also supports critical investments needed to add classrooms space and fund more safe and quality space for early childhood facilities. This includes an ask for \$20 million to help co-locate early childhood classrooms or centers with affordable housing developments – as well as \$110 million for grants overseen by Business Oregon to provide more funding for eligible pre-school programs.

Thank you for your time, and your support for OPK 0-5 programs and the Department of Early Learning and Care, and Oregon's Early Childhood System as a whole.

Sincerely,

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