



April 3, 2023

Chair Neron, Vice Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Wright, and Members of the Committee on Education

Re: House Bill 3198 – Support, Early Literacy Success Initiative

Chair Neron, Vice Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Wright, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Creeana Bort, I am a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, and I represent the NAYA Action Fund located in Portland, OR. Founded by the community, for the community, the NAYA Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a mission to expand political advocacy and build electoral power in partnership with the Native community. The NAYA Action Fund provides tools to shape public policy, cultivate leadership, and elect's champions for issues impacting Native people. Our vision of systemic change is youth-centered, family-driven, and elder guided. I write in support of House Bill 3198.

HB 3198 would direct the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to establish an Early Learning Success Initiative grant program, providing investments for our youth that will have lasting impacts for seven generations to come. HB 3198 would invest in early education by providing increased literacy programs for pre-kindergarten through elementary school students, improving support to guardians so they can successfully help develop their children's literacy skills at home, and aiming towards reducing disparities for student groups who have historically experienced educational inequalities. By increasing grant availability, we can reach our most vulnerable student populations with better care equipped to handle the barriers they are experiencing. Teachers and administrators would also be able to receive updated training to improve their ability to deliver literacy instruction to students pre-kindergarten through elementary, a time which is most impactful for the growth and success of a young child. Grants would also help expand existing culturally and linguistically responsive early literacy programs with family engagement, opening new possibilities and breaking down barriers for those in our community. More importantly, the bill would prioritize equitable access to literacy programs across the whole state.

Access to early education is a vital investment for the enrichment and opportunity of Oregon's children. On behalf of the NAYA Action Fund, we request your support of HB 3198, expanding and investing in literacy programs and grant opportunities that would break down barriers and invest in the future of all Oregonians.

Thank you,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Creeana Bort".

Creeana Bort
Policy and Advocacy Organizer