

Testimony SB 5506

Good afternoon Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Ways and Means Committee.

For the record, my name is Lori Colvin.

I am the Regional Program Manager for Healthy Families Oregon- High Desert, serving Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties.

Healthy Families Oregon is a voluntary, statewide child abuse prevention program. Healthy Families helps prevent child abuse by partnering with parents either prenatally, or immediately after the birth of their child. With a highly skilled specialist visiting them in their homes each week and guiding new parents through the often confusing first three years of their child's life, parents are empowered to build strong nurturing relationships with their children, to advocate for themselves through community resources and to establish and achieve individual goals. Healthy Families Oregon is accredited through Healthy Families America, an affiliate of Prevent Child Abuse America- the nation's oldest and largest organization committed to preventing child maltreatment.

In Central Oregon, Healthy Families is in partnership with St. Charles Healthcare System. We have an Eligibility Screener at the hospital who visits families having just given birth. She screens for risk factors such as traumatic family history, inadequate housing, depression/anxiety- or other mental health issues, substance abuse, social isolation etc., which are all stressors leading to poor outcomes for children.

During the recent economic and staffing issues in Oregon, Healthy Families Oregon -High Desert has lost staff to better paying jobs and has been unable to fill open positions. Healthy Families needs to be able to offer salaries that are not only equitable with other Early Childhood positions but are also fair. I respectfully ask that you pass SB 5506, which will provide the funds we need to train and retain excellent, committed staff.

Thank you for your consideration