

Submitter: Katherine Molder Collins
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Thank you for being here - in the Mountain time zone. My name is Katherine Collins. I reside in Ontario and I am testifying in support of SB606, the Nonprofit Modernization Act.

When reviewing all the pleas for supporting various programs in dozens of sectors, I urge you, indeed all policymakers, to recognize that much of what government is asked to fund is tied to problems. I would ask that you give highest priority to those areas of the budget which can PREVENT those problems from occurring in the first place.

I can't help but point out that Oregon's Relief Nurseries prevent and address childhood trauma, which saves billions as children do not go into foster care, parents are not incarcerated. These infants, toddlers, and preschoolers – they don't go on to struggle then drop out of school, self-medicate or turn to drugs, or require welfare benefits. Brain scientists to economists will affirm this.

I served as an executive director of the local Relief Nursery for nearly nine years and during that time, while we were serving as many as 52 children and their families in our program, many of whom lived in abject poverty, I often worried about classroom and home visiting staff members whose hourly wages put them dangerously close to the poverty line. These individuals with college degrees were so uniquely trained, part child care provider, part preschool teacher, quasi-therapists, dealing with multiple families' significant stressors which mean they're dealing with lots of secondhand trauma.

I encourage you to support SB 606 so that all nonprofits who have contracts with state entities can pay them more equitably for the incredibly difficult work they are doing. Oregon's nonprofit organizations, after all, are ultimately addressing those ills that negatively affect the quality of life in all corners of our great state.

Again, I thank you your time and support for SB 606.

Katherine Molder Collins, APR