

February 4, 2025

RE: Senate Bill 896: Testimony in Support of Afterschool Learning and Enrichment Grant Program

Dear Chair Senator Frederick, Vice-Chair Senator Weber and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis, we support funding for afterschool and summer learning and enrichment grants. I have had the honor to serve our community in this role for the past 18 years and without a doubt having a safe, supervised and enriching place to learn and grow changes young people's lives for the better.

In our community, we are the only year-round provider of out-of-school care, providing critical services for working parents, and parents pursuing their educational goals. Research shows that afterschool and summer programs are a **lifeline for working families** and help them keep their jobs during the times when school is not in session. Nationally, 95% of parents report that they can work because their child can go to a Club.

Having a connection to at least one caring adult and a place to belong supports a youth to build resiliency and weather the ups and downs of growing from child to teen to young adult.

Without adequate funding, thousands of youth, especially for those from low-income and underserved communities—would lose access to these essential programs. We have a childcare crisis in Oregon in small and large communities. Now more than ever, parents and providers need support to maintain quality programs and ensure the capacity to keep our kids safe.

We support direct investment in community organizations to continue and expand our capability to provide comprehensive afterschool and summer programs.

We appreciate your commitment to supporting the educational and developmental needs of our children.

Sincerely,



Helen Higgins

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