

February 12, 2025

TO: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
FROM: Ali King, on behalf of Our Children Oregon's 2025 Children's Agenda
SUBJECT: Support for SB 692

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ali King and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for Our Children Oregon (OCO), a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. The Children's Agenda, convened by OCO, brings together a coalition of more than 135 organizations statewide dedicated to improving child wellbeing in Oregon. **SB 692 is a top priority of the 2025 Children's Agenda and has strong and broad support from our partner organizations across Oregon.**

The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among high-income countries. In Oregon, women of color are more likely to lose their babies or to experience complications in pregnancy. Maternal mortality rates are rooted in racial & geographic disparities driven by systemic racism and unequal access to quality healthcare. **Evidence shows that access to culturally specific doulas, lactation consultants, and other perinatal supports increases positive birth outcomes.**

In Oregon, between 4 and 12 maternal deaths happen each year, a number that is underreported by up to 1/3. For every 1 maternal death, around 50 additional women experience severe complications during pregnancy, labor, and delivery that nearly result in death.

Oregon needs a multi-faceted approach to expand the perinatal workforce that is culturally specific and will create opportunities and eliminate barriers to giving and receiving care, especially for Black women and people in rural communities.

SB 692:

- Specifically addresses expanding access to doulas and perinatal service providers, regardless of birth outcome. This ensures that parents who experience infant loss still receive doula support.
- Mandates public and private health insurance coverage for birth and postpartum doula services and lactation consultants and counselors.
- Expands doula coverage during the postpartum period, including up to 12 reimbursable postpartum visits.
- Increases doula pay and number of visits that are covered.
- Creates alignment between private & public insurance coverage.
- Establishes the Community-Based Perinatal Provider Access Fund to support training & education, outreach, recruitment, expansion of doula organizations, and technical assistance to support racially, ethnically, linguistically, and geographically diverse perinatal service providers.

We appreciate the work you are doing for Oregon's children and families and we urge you to **vote YES on SB 692.**

Sincerely,
Our Children Oregon
Baby Blues Connection
Black Parent Initiative
Center for Childhood Safety and Wellbeing
Children's Institute
Housing Oregon
Latino Network
Next Up Action Fund
Nurse-Family Partnership
Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries
Oregon Association of Student Councils
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Primary Care Association
Oregon School Nurses' Association
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
Reach Out and Read NW
Southern Oregon Success
Urban League of Portland