



Support Senate Bill 694
Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
February 25th, 2025

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

My name is Arielle Hacker and I am the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon) - a statewide nonprofit dedicated to child and family wellbeing through community-based, comprehensive, primary prevention strategies. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 694, which would enhance the Oregon Kids Credit.

Enhancing the Oregon Kids Credit would bring downstream cost savings to our state.

Policies like SB 694 have been shown to lead to a long list of positive impacts on families, and result in cost savings in other systems. This is related to improved child and family wellbeing and the resulting reductions in state system involvement including child welfare, the criminal justice system and the healthcare system, among others.

- Research conducted by Chapin Hall documented and confirmed that increases in economic and concrete supports to families prevent child welfare involvement.¹
- Another study found that for every thousand dollars states spend on benefits per person experiencing poverty, there was a reduction in reporting of child abuse and neglect (4.3%), reduction in foster care placements (2.1%) and reduction in child fatalities related to abuse (7.7%).²
- In a separate study, research showed an immediate 14% reduction in calls to the child abuse hotline following the distribution of tax credit payments.³
- Finally, another study identified a trend in declining emergency department visits for abuse and neglect following the enactment of the expanded tax credit.⁴

PCA Oregon partners with over 40 community-based organizations, state agencies, and advocacy coalitions to actualize our vision for an Oregon where all kids and families are living happy and purposeful lives with hope for the future. This vision hinges on our youngest

¹ Monahan, E. K., Grewal-Kok, Y., Cusick, G., & Anderson, C. (2023). Economic and concrete supports: An evidence-based service for child welfare prevention. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

² Puls, H. T., Hall, M., Anderst, J. D., Gurley, T., Perrin, J., & Chung, P. J. (2021). State spending on public benefit programs and child maltreatment. *Pediatrics*, 148(5), e2021050685. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-050685>.

³ Merrill-Francis, M., Chen, M.S., Dunphy, C., et al. Injury Prevention Publication ahead of print: Received October 2, 2023.. doi:10.1136/ip-2023-045130.

⁴ Bullinger, L.R., & Boy A. (2023) Association of Expanded Child Tax Credit Payments With Child Abuse and Neglect Emergency Department Visits. *JAMA Network Open*. 2023 Feb 1;6(2):e2255639. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.55639. PMID: 36795416; PMCID: PMC9936349.

Oregonians and their families having access to the economic and concrete supports required to meet their basic needs.

Families in Oregon are grappling with economic insecurity, exacerbated by rising prices. When families don't have access to necessary support at critical moments, Oregonians and our state systems ultimately bear the burden through increased costs (eg. healthcare expenses, allegations of abuse/neglect, etc.). **Investing in upstream prevention strategies and ensuring families have access to the resources they need when they need them is not only more compassionate, but also far more cost-effective than addressing the fallout of these challenges later on.**

The most direct way to support Oregonians is to provide the resources they need and deserve to afford rent, food, and other basic needs. Strengthening the Oregon Kids Credit would be an effective and efficient way to deliver resources to families struggling to make ends meet.

Please support Oregon's children and families by advancing SB 694.

Sincerely,

Arielle Hacker

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