



**Support Senate Bill 420**  
**Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health**  
**February 26th, 2025**

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

My name is Nicole Cunningham and I am the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Oregon, a statewide nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect through upstream, comprehensive community-based prevention strategies. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 420, which would sustain and expand Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) home visiting services.

Home visiting programs provide parents and caregivers with the critical tools, support, and knowledge to create safe home environments and establish a secure bond with their babies.<sup>1</sup> Home visiting programs like HFO reduce child welfare system involvement by conducting ongoing screening to determine whether families are at increased risk for child maltreatment, supporting family wellbeing through parenting education and skill-building, leveraging the expertise of professionals trained in infant and child development, and expanding the network of partners supporting families.<sup>2</sup>

Home visiting programs like HFO support families by fostering positive childhood experiences (PCEs), and assisting parents and caregivers in navigating challenging caregiving moments in healthy ways.<sup>3</sup> Evidence shows<sup>4</sup> that home visiting programs like HFO:

- Promote healthy child development, promote positive caregiver-child interactions, and increase parent confidence while lowering parental stress.
- Result in better birth outcomes, increased breastfeeding, and reduction (48%) in infants born at low birth weight.
- Increase school readiness.
- Reduce risk of homelessness.
- Improve mental health for parents and caregivers.

PCA Oregon is the Oregon chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America—the oldest and largest national nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We would like to highlight that HFO is a program of Health Families America (HFA), which is a nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting program operating in 38 states, the District of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.casey.org/home-visiting-programs/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.casey.org/home-visiting-programs/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/home-visiting/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/home-visiting/>

Columbia, and five U.S. territories.<sup>5</sup> HFA is the PCA America signature home visiting program and is the only program rated by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse that had research indicating **effectiveness with children and families across all racial and ethnic groups.**<sup>6</sup>

HFO is not the only Oregon home visiting program, and PCA Oregon recognizes the importance of providing a menu of home visiting options for families because families are not a monolith. In addition to supporting SB 420, we are also supporting legislation that funds a variety of evidence-based home visiting programs in our state. Home visiting is a critical strategy to get kids and families the support they need early, helping to avoid costly interventions later in life, such as child welfare. By supporting an array of options, we seek to ensure that all families will have access to these important resources when they need them and where they want to receive them.

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. **We urge you to join us in the important work of making this vision a reality by advancing SB 420.**

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children and families.

*"There is no better program, dollar-for-dollar, than Healthy Families America."*  
— Ron Wyden, US Senator (D-Oregon)<sup>7</sup>

Sincerely,

*Nicole Cunningham*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/map/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/home-visiting/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://preventchildabuse.org/what-we-do/home-visiting/>