

Submitter: Peter Buckley  
On Behalf Of: Myself  
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1167

Dear Madame Chair & Members of the Committee:

My name is Peter Buckley, I'm a former state representative from south Jackson County, having served 12 years in the Oregon House representing the district that the wonderful Pam Marsh does now.

Since leaving the legislature, I've learned a lot.

In previous testimony to your committee concerning home visiting programs, I mentioned that for 8 of the 12 years I was in the legislature, I served as House Co-Chair of Ways & Means. And I talked about the fact that as challenging as things were fifteen years or so ago during the Great Recession, the needs of Oregonians have grown faster than our state has resources to address them. There is only one way to change this dynamic, and that is working upstream, providing resources and support in pregnancy and early childhood in order to reduce serious and painful downstream needs in addiction, mental health, poverty and incarceration.

The collaboration I work with, Southern Oregon Success, is a partnership between all levels of education, health care, mental health care, human services, public safety and workforce development in Jackson and Josephine counties, housed at the Southern Oregon Education Service District.

The goal of the collaboration is simple: to do everything possible to make sure every child and every family and every community has the resources and support they need to thrive.

Your committee held a hearing previously on brain development and the crucial time pregnancy and the early years of a child's life are in determining long-term outcomes. Our collaboration has been doing training sessions on this area of knowledge since May of 2016. Over that period, our team of volunteers has presented over 700 sessions to over 20,000 people across all sectors in our region.

With that knowledge as a common understanding and common vocabulary, our collaboration worked to find practical and effective ways to move upstream with our efforts. A key moment in our work came in October 2021 when we invited former Governor Kitzhaber to present a paper on the idea of developing a child success system in each region of the state. This idea—a comprehensive, systemic approach rather than working program by program—accelerated our work significantly.

Our collaboration spent 9 months in 2022, working with multiple work groups and focus groups, with over 100 people participating, to design what is now the Southern Oregon Early Childhood Support Network, the child success system for Jackson and Josephine counties.

Working in close partnership with our Early Learning Hub, we are increasing access to high quality child care and preschools, scaling up behavior health support for early childhood and coordinating efforts to provide resources and support to priority families (such as teen parents, parents in poverty, rural parents, parents with children with special needs, etc.) through our Family Success Plan program.

The Family Success Plan program features trusted community partners, such as our regional relief nursery, the Family Nurturing Center and others, working with families to develop a plan for the family's success based on the social determinants of health and the Strengthening Families framework (a national framework proven to increase family stability). The community partner then invests an average of \$1,000 in flexible funds to help the family reach their goals.

Our pilot program in 2023-24 served 72 families, with each family showing significant progress towards stability and success. In 2024-25, we are working with 330 families with plans to continue to expand next year.

Our budget request for SB 1167 is to be able to continue to strengthen our Early Childhood Support Network, with an emphasis on child and family behavioral health. I strongly support SB 1167 as a significant step forward for our state, providing a foundation we can expand on over time to ensure that every child in every part of Oregon has the chance to thrive.