



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 13, 2017

To: [Joint Subcommittee on Education](#)
Co-chair [Senator Rod Monroe](#)
Co-chair [Representative Barbara Smith Warner](#)

Re: [SB 5516](#) Department of Education
Budget for the **Early Learning Division, SUPPORT**

The League of Women Voters has [Positions on Education](#) that support early identification of risk factors and early intervention. Our [Children at Risk](#) study, published in 2015, detailed the formation of Oregon's Early Learning System; we continue to follow Early Learning. We believe that the early years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life.

Early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. LWVOR supports policies, programs, and funding at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of all children. These include: Nutrition and food access for vulnerable children and families; access to affordable, safe, and stable housing; early screening (physical, dental, mental, and behavioral) for all children; early prenatal care and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental); access to affordable, quality child care; access to early literacy and pre-school programs, including but not limited to Early Head Start and Head Start; programs for mental health and addictions treatment for parents; family support, including but not limited to home visiting, parenting classes, and family relief nurseries; comprehensive services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities; use of evidence-based practices in child welfare and foster care; programs to reduce poverty by providing parents with assistance in job training and education; and policies and legislation to reduce racial or ethnic minority status inequities. The League believes that governments, at all levels, have a responsibility to oversee and coordinate a comprehensive network of services to maximize children's readiness to be successful in school while optimizing available resources.

We follow changing legislation, metrics and budget issues. We routinely monitor year-round meetings of the Early Learning Council; the continuing maturation of the 16 regional early learning hubs; the flow of funding to local services; the expansion of pre-school programs for children in historically underserved populations; home visiting; relief nurseries; child care licensing; and the work across agency silos to coordinate services for the most vulnerable children. We monitor these within the Department of Education and while working with the Oregon Health Authority, CCOs and the Oregon Department of Human Services. **We believe Early Learning expenditures in SB 5516 are cost effective, so urge support of the proposed 2017-2019 investments in children.** As LWVOR has stated in numerous revenue and ways and means hearings this session, Oregon must find stable and fair revenue sources, rather than cutting services to those with high risk factors, Oregon's most vulnerable.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.


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