



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-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 6, 2019

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
Co-Chair Senator Lew Frederick
Co-Chair Representative Susan McLain

Re: **HB 5015** – Oregon Department of Education – Early Learning Division (ELD) – **Comment**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes 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.*

Today you have heard testimony from many early-learning direct service providers, educators, child care providers, and others working daily with Oregon's youngest – those not able to testify in their own behalf but capably represented by these professionals.

This session you are looking at a bare-bones Ways and Means allocation anticipating that a recession is imminent. We wish to stress that an investment in the early years pays off throughout a lifetime. There are a series of program elements that have been built over the past few legislative sessions. **All these pieces fit together in an elegant jig-saw puzzle** to first serve children with the greatest risk factors and then build to ultimately assure that early-intervention prepares children for kindergarten and ultimately high school graduation. **Please keep all the pieces of this critical budget.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Chris Vogel
Education Policy Coordinator

** In the Spring of 2015, League members throughout Oregon studied [Children at Risk and Early Learning](#) then discussed consensus questions posed by the LWVOR study committee, and submitted their views to the state League. Those views were combined to formulate the following position, which can now be used for advocacy by local Leagues as well as the LWVOR Action Team.*

LWVOR Children at Risk Position Statement: The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes 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. The League 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 childcare (see LWVOR Child Care position)
- 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 Policies and legislation to reduce racial or ethnic minority status inequities