



VOICES UNITED.  
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

February 10, 201

House Committee on Human Services  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2826

Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin. I am the Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director at Our Children Oregon.

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First For Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities. We continue to connect a community of 115 advocates, coalitions, and organizations through The Children's Agenda, a legislative agenda championing equitable state legislative policies and shared investments to improve the lives of Oregon's children and their families.

HB 2826 to increase funding for Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) by \$6 million and modify the funding distribution formula is part of the 2021 Children's Agenda, and we have worked with many of our partners on this effort over the last several years.

**This concept was on the 2019 Children's Agenda, it was a priority on the 2020 Children's Agenda as unfinished business from the 2019 session, and is once again on the 2021 Children's Agenda.**

Children's advocacy centers provide medical exams, forensic interviews and follow-up treatment to children who have been victimized, or who were witness to a crime. Increased funding to CACs can help every child have access to quality, comprehensive, child-focused services. Children's Advocacy Centers have never been adequately funded – and the problem is worse since COVID-19.

We also want to highlight the importance of the modification to the funding formula to help ensure that CACs especially in rural communities

## The Children's Agenda

*is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.*



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across our state have a more adequate level of funding. This can help address some of the current issues CACs in rural communities are facing including not being able to maintain a medical provider.

Lack of access to CACs may result in additional trauma as a result of children and youth receiving services in an emergency room or police station, rather than a child-friendly setting designed specifically for them. CACs provide that space and with this bill will be able to provide services for more children and youth.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge you to support HB 2826.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

*View the 2021 Children's Agenda at [www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda](http://www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda)*