

February 11, 2021

House Committee on Education  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2835

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Weber and Members of the Committee,

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 2835 Supporting Basic Needs/Benefit Navigators on campuses is on the 2021 Children's Agenda, and we are working with our partners in support of this important bill.

This bill would help college students, many of whom are parents, to access food and basic needs assistance by establishing navigators to work with students on each campus. This proposal comes from a comprehensive engagement process elevating student voices about their needs.

We approach this issue from several perspectives. First, it is critical that we look at the racial and ethnic disparities in the needs of our youth as they attend college. In the [Hope Center's 2020 #RealCollege Survey](#)

- 54% of Black students identify as food insecure
- 60% of Indigenous students identify as food insecure
- 34% of white students identify as food insecure

HB 2835 will help connect all of those students to benefits and other supports that can begin to address their basic needs.

We also want to highlight some of the disparities for students who have been in foster care. For those students, the Hope Center's survey reports:

## 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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- 65% are food insecure
- 72 % are housing insecure

We also see this bill as a two-generation strategy because many students are also parents. Oregon data finds that students who are parents have higher rates food insecurity (50%) and housing insecurity (65%) than their peers without children (39% and 49% respectively). [National data](#) finds that student parents are disproportionately BIPOC, women and first generation college students.

The data shows the needs, and coupled with the [student voices](#) elevated through listening sessions and a survey administered and facilitated by Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon with support from the Oregon Student Association and the testimony from students today, HB 2835 is an important step to connect students to existing benefits and to include students in campus wide planning on how best to reduce food and housing insecurity.

Thank you for your consideration and your service. We urge your support of HB 2835.

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)*