



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

March 8, 2021

Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 557

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Knopp, 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 557 to expand dental coverage for Oregon's Compact of Free Association (COFA) residents is part of the 2021 Children's Agenda.

SB 557 would provide Medicaid-level dental care for those COFA residents in Oregon who do not qualify for Medicaid but do qualify for the COFA Premium Assistance Program for their medical insurance.

Over the last decade, the COFA Alliance National Network (CANN) has worked tirelessly to ensure that COFA Oregonians have access to the healthcare they need. However, Oregon has yet to provide COFA residents with adequate access to dental care. We know how important oral health care is to overall health and we must do better.

Too many children and families in Oregon don't have adequate access to dental care, including low-income COFA residents. Based on the 2017 Oregon Smile Survey, children of color and

**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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children facing poverty are suffering from high rates of dental disease. Nearly half of Oregon children ages 6 – 9 have already had a cavity. Oregon children in rural areas are 11 percent more likely to have cavities than children in urban areas. And children of color have higher rates of cavities, untreated decay, and rampant decay than white children. These preventable oral health conditions can contribute to increased absenteeism, increased risk of other negative health outcomes, poor school performance, and poor self-esteem.

By passing SB 557, we can ensure that COFA residents have access to the oral health care they need. We ask for your support for SB 557.

On behalf of the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

View the 2021 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda