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## **Early Childhood Advocates Testify in Salem to Protect Oregon's Voluntary Home Visiting Program**

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A coalition of parents, early childhood advocates, and elected officials will testify today at the House Education Committee on protecting Oregon's vital voluntary home visiting program. High-quality home visiting helps foster safe and supportive home environments for Oregon's most vulnerable children. Currently, less than 20 percent of eligible families have access to voluntary home visiting services.

Research shows that high-quality, evidence-based home visiting programs work. Children whose families participate in voluntary home visiting experience better health outcomes, are less likely to suffer abuse or neglect, and are more prepared for kindergarten. Home visiting services also improve family stability by connecting parents to critical employment, education, housing, and other supports. "We broke the cycle. We're not raising our kids the way we or our parents were raised. And a big part of that has been having a home visitor come to our house every week," said parent Willy Johnson of Hillsboro.

The cost of not investing wisely in young children is continued abysmal graduation rates, rising costs for K-12 education and social services, and the squandered potential of thousands of Oregon's children. Low-income children in rural and urban settings and children of color are least likely to get the early learning and developmental support all children need. That's why strategic proven investments in early childhood development are crucial.

"We strongly encourage state legislators to protect and increase wise investments in early childhood education and healthy development," said Marion County District Attorney Walt Beglau. Oregon's most vulnerable children benefit from high-quality early childhood programs and services. We call on state lawmakers to continue to prioritize these proven, cost-effective, and high impact investments."

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**Children's Institute** is one of Oregon's leading voices for increased public investment in high-quality early childhood education and healthy development, the most effective strategies to improve long-term outcomes for children.

**Children First for Oregon** works to improve the lives of Oregon's children by galvanizing public support and informing decision makers about what kids need to thrive. Children First has been Oregon's voice for kids for 25 years.

**Fight Crime: Invest in Kids** is a national nonpartisan anti-crime organization made up of over 140 Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, Prosecutors, Attorney Generals, crime survivors and other law enforcement leaders in Oregon and over 5,000 nationally, who promote greater investments in programs proven to direct kids to a better path in life, leading them away from crime towards success.