



Oregon Early Learning Council

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House Committee on Housing Testimony of Sue Miller on House Bill 2100 March 2, 2021

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For the record, Chair Fahey and members of the Committee, I am Sue Miller, Chair of the Oregon Early Learning Council. I am delighted to speak in support of House Bill 2100.

In our commitment to addressing the root causes of inequities in the early care and education sector, the Early Learning Council supports the efforts of Oregon Housing and Community Services to meet the need for a more racially and culturally diverse group of applicants eligible for funding for affordable housing.

The Early Learning Council is charged with coordinating a unified and aligned system of early learning grounded in the science of child development and equity to assure that our young children enter school ready to learn and that all families are healthy, stable and attached. With significant public input, the Council developed a five-year early learning system strategic plan, [Raise Up Oregon](#), which focuses on making progress toward these goals through cross-sector partnerships in early care and education, K-12, health, housing and human services. Our recently released [Progress Report](#) provides dozens of examples of success in developing and implementing inter-agency programs.

A unique feature of our strategic plan and the Early Learning Council is our work across multiple state agencies with five agency directors serving as ex officio members of the Council: the Department of Education, the Health Authority, the Department of Human Services, the Housing and Community Services Agency and the Early Learning Division.

The Early Learning Council established a set of legislative priorities this year, and one of our cross-cutting priorities is to ensure the option of direct contracting with local organizations and culturally specific organizations across all agencies. This is part of a strategy for deepening the partnerships between the state and local community-based organizations in all the key areas that impact the wellbeing, development and security of Oregon's youngest children.

The proposed legislation accomplishes exactly that by continuing to include Community Action Agencies and adding funding eligibility for culturally specific organizations, Veteran serving organizations, youth homeless providers, senior housing providers, domestic violence shelter providers, cities, counties, school districts, and others. This expansion of eligible applicants within regions and communities will better meet the housing needs of Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and to allow me to express our support for work to expand the range of organizations who can help address the homeless crisis in Oregon.