



## 2019 Issue Summaries

### Protecting Oregon's Children and Seniors

Oregon House Democrats are working to ensure the rights of every Oregonian are protected, including children, seniors, people with disabilities and refugees, through policies and investments in a wide range of programs.

#### Support for Families and Children

##### Passed Into Law

##### Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit

HB 2164 expands the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), returning approximately \$50 million to low-income families in the upcoming biennium.

##### Supports for Families Receiving TANF

HB 2032 outlines three pilot programs that make targeted investments to reduce barriers to self-sufficiency for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The pilot programs including: a housing supports pilot program (\$10.5 million) a mental and behavioral health supports pilot program (\$1.5 million) and an employment and training pilot (\$3.5 million).

##### Universal Home Visiting Program

SB 526 requires the Oregon Health Authority to implement a statewide nurse home visiting program to provide voluntary health education and services to families, regardless of income.

##### High Quality Child Care (Baby Promise)

HB 2024 requires the Early Learning Division to establish a program to improve access to high-quality infant and toddler care for low-income Oregonians.

##### Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care

HB 2346 establishes a task force on access to quality affordable child care. The task force will make recommendations to the legislature to address barriers to accessing existing child care subsidies and expand access to child care to meet the needs of Oregon families with children.

##### Safety in Child Care

SB 490 permanently prohibits individuals from providing child care if they are required to report as sex offenders or have been subject to a substantiated report of abuse that resulted in serious harm or death. HB 2027 creates additional enforcement tools that will allow the Office of Child Care to continue to ensure children are healthy and safe in licensed child care, recorded programs and regulated subsidy facilities.

##### Funded

Increased funding for Employment-Related Day Care (ERDC) approximately 12% from the previous biennium to provide affordable child care to an estimated 8,230 families in Oregon.

Invested \$40 million in federal funds to support families receiving TANF, including:

- \$13 million to cover additional caseload costs;
- \$7.5 million to help TANF recipients who are over the 60-month time limit;
- \$3.5 million for an employment and training pilot program to help connect families to employment opportunities;
- \$1.5 million to Oregon Health Authority to administer a pilot to better connect individuals who need mental and behavioral health services or alcohol and drug treatment services to those services;
- \$10.5 million to Oregon Housing and Community Services to administer a housing pilot to prevent and address homelessness for families receiving TANF;
- \$4 million to Oregon Housing and Community Services for the housing stabilization program, which provides housing services to TANF eligible families statewide, even if those families aren't currently receiving TANF.

## **Child Welfare**

### **Passed Into Law**

#### Family First Prevention Services

SB 171 makes changes to state law to support the Department of Human Services operating in alignment with the federal Family First Prevention Services Act, which will allow federal dollars to pay for services to families that are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The federal law also limits funding for children who are placed in a setting that is not a foster family home unless it a qualified residential treatment program.

#### Youth with Specialized Needs System of Care

SB 1 establishes a 25-member System of Care Advisory Council to improve state and local systems that serve youth, by centralizing statewide policy development and planning.

#### Improving Child Protective Custody Standards

HB 2849 updates standards under which a child may be taken into protective custody to prevent the disproportionate removal of children of color.

#### Inclusive Degree Requirements for Child Welfare Workers

HB 2033 expands degree requirements for child welfare caseworkers to include associate degrees with additional training to maintain the quality of child welfare caseworkers while expanding the opportunity to participate in the job.

#### Increased Transparency in Child Abuse Fatality Reviews

SB 832 strengthens the Critical Incident Review Team (CIRT) process to ensure that child fatalities are prevented. The Measure directs the Department of Human Services (DHS) to assign CIRT within 10 days of becoming aware of an unexpected death of a child in custody of DHS if DHS reasonably believes death resulted from child abuse.

#### Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) Operational Improvements

HB 2568 Directs the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to review the differences in operations between CASA volunteer programs in different counties based on the differences in Department of Human Services and provide recommendations for operational best practices and standardization.

### **Funded**

- \$40 million investment to maintain 2,420 positions that would have been lost due to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families constraints.
- Adds \$8.9 million General Fund and 46 positions to improve staffing levels for the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline. Additional staff will help handle a high volume of calls and mitigate caller wait times.
- Adds \$3 million and 17 positions to support the development of a data-informed statewide foster family recruitment and retention model.
- Adds \$12.7 million General Fund to provide full legal representation to child welfare caseworkers in all juvenile dependency proceedings.
- Adds \$2.2 million General Fund and 16 positions to mentor and support first-year caseworkers to increase caseworker retention.
- Adds \$3.1 million General Fund to pay for statewide expansion of a program called Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP). This is an evidence-based program that improves placement stability for foster youth.
- Invests \$2.3 million General Fund to continue the Leveraging Intensive Family Engagement (LIFE) program, which offers monthly case planning meetings, enhanced family finding, and team collaboration.
- \$4 million General Fund to help increase capacity for in-home services under the Family First Act.
- \$3.5 million General Fund to pay for therapeutic foster home recruitment, training, and support.

## **Elder Care**

### **Passed Into Law**

#### Information about the Services of Long-Term Care Ombudsman

HB 2524 requires long-term care facilities, residential facilities, and adult foster homes to provide residents with information about the availability and services of Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

#### Additional Capacity for Long-Term Care Ombudsman

HB 3413 provides three additional ombudsman to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office, for a total of 10 deputy ombudsman. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program is an independent state agency that serves long-term care facility residents through complaint investigation, resolution, and advocacy for improvement in resident care.

### **Funded**

Invests \$31.6 million in Aging and People with Disability (APD) programs to do the following:

- Adds 20 client care surveyor positions to reduce the backlog of inspections and to keep up with facility oversight.
- Adds 143 positions of mostly case managers to address workload issues in local APD offices.
- Increases rates for long-term care service providers to ensure they are meeting the needs of people in their care.

## **Support for Oregonians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)**

### **Passed Into Law**

#### Human Rights for Individuals with I/DD

SB 493 establishes Oregon Human Rights Commission to safeguard dignity and basic human rights of individuals who have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

#### Housing for Oregonians with I/DD

SB 491 transfers \$6.3 million to the Oregon Community Foundation to provide housing for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

#### Safety of Individuals with I/DD

SB 19 adds to the list of mandatory reporters of abuse to increase the safety of Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Directs DHS to adopt rules to impose civil penalties if service providers violate state law or rules in providing services.

#### Children's Access to I/DD Services

SB 20 eliminates the distinction between developmentally disabled children and adults for purpose of eligibility and access to services.

#### Equitable Treatment of Parents with I/DD

SB 492 extends state policy of offering appropriate reunification services to parents and guardians, to include equal reunification opportunities for parents and guardians with disabilities.

## **Funded**

- \$13 million increase in General Fund to address the work required to meet the needs of individuals with more complex caseloads.
- \$30 million in General Fund for provider rates to bring up the wages of direct support professionals to as close to \$15 an hour as possible by the end of the 2019-2021 biennium. Care providers are struggling to recruit and retain direct support professionals because their wages are so low, and these professionals provide crucial services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Increasing their wages will help to retain this critical workforce.
- Adds \$4.9 million General Fund (\$15.4 million total funds) to provide enhanced foster care services to about 140 youth with specialized needs. These funds will help develop small group home settings for youth.