

TESTIMONY: SB110

DATE: March 19, 1991
TO: Senator Shirley Gold, Chair
Senate Education Committee Members
FROM: Jerralynn Ness, Executive Director 648-6646
Washington County Community Action

Senator Gold and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB110. My name is Jerralynn Ness and I am the executive director of the Washington County Community Action Organization. Our primary mission is to address the causes and conditions of poverty. While we provide a wide range of emergency, basic needs and self-sufficiency services to low income families, our Head Start and State Pre-Kindergarten programs offer the most successful tools we have in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

I have worked in poverty programs for the past 18 years and it has become very clear to me that "Head Start" type early intervention with young children and self-sufficiency support to low income families are the two most effective and cost efficient ways that we can invest in the economic and social future of Oregonians.

Washington County Community Action has traditionally enrolled some of our county's most disadvantaged children and families into our Head Start and State Pre-Kindergarten programs.

While we have only eight months to work with these families, the results of our program services are far reaching and long lasting. The education and support received by enrolled families has altered the course of their lives and their childrens lives, paving the way to a future of economic security and social stability.

I sincerely believe that the best investment this state can make is in "Head Start" type pre-kindergarten and quality family support services. I urge your passage of SB110. Thank you.