

State-of-the-State Address
before the Portland City Club
January 15, 1988

"..now it is time for this generation of Oregonians to meet our challenge: TO
BECOME STEWARDS OF THE CHILD."

See complete text, "Major Speeches" section of this notebook; second speech, page 7.

Remarks
Youth Conference
February 1, 1988

The Children's Agenda will emphasize local planning and local decision-making. And the agenda will emphasize partnerships with parents, probably our greatest untapped resource.

I am not going to stand up here and tell you we will have loads of money for new programs. We do not. Our success will be determined by how well we invest our limited dollars, as much as by the amount we invest.

I believe that a relatively modest investment can reap great dividends.

I don't have to tell you that there are no easy answers -- no pat solutions.

But I am convinced that the problems we face are no match for the effort and sacrifice so many Oregonians are ready to make.

I recently received a letter from an elementary school principal in response to the state of the state address. She wrote: "What an exhilarating time to be an educator. What a joy to accept responsibility for the development of all talents in our children."

Whether or not you are educators, or elected officials, or business persons, you are all stewards of the child. And I hope that you all feel the exhilaration and joy of giving of yourself...of saving the life of a child...of rescuing the future.

Address Before Members of the
State's Boards and Commissions
February 16, 1988

...But today I am going to ask you to make that extra effort, to give even more of yourselves, to save the life of a child, to rescue the future. Because today in Oregon, too many of our children are denied the chance to shape their destiny.

A month ago in the State of the State Address, I said that it is time for this generation of Oregonians to meet our challenge: to become stewards of the child as we have been stewards of the land. That we guarantee to every child in every region of our state a greater chance for a decent life -- a life defined by healthy minds and bodies and by the dignity that comes from providing for oneself.

But the challenge we face cannot be met by government edict alone. There is no all-purpose blueprint; there is no infallible solution.

Each time I raise the issue of building a Children's Agenda, I am asked how much it will cost. This is the wrong question for two reasons:

- First, regardless of the cost, Oregonians are rightly suspicious of new government schemes for social improvement.
- Second, costs must be determined by a citizenry that concludes such an agenda is essential and necessary.

An agenda can be built through an informed, statewide consensus, capable of separating the possible from the pipe dream. A consensus forged in the community...in our churches and synagogues...in our schools and city halls...in our homes and neighborhoods.

This is a new way for state government -- but a tried and traditional way for Oregon, whose strength and vitality have always come from handling our own affairs in our own communities.

Can we continue this tradition for our children's sake?

Listen to these letters I have received from Oregonians ready to go to work on building a Children's Agenda:

From Eugene: "As one individual I will do whatever I can to assist your resolve to save the kids."

From Oregon City: "What can we do to help you build a Children's Agenda? We want to make this work!"

Again from Eugene: "You will not find Oregon's citizens unwilling or uninterested when it comes time to work on this agenda."

And from West Linn: "As I write this, I can foresee many hurdles to be overcome. A host of them come to mind. But if enough people of good will and dedication come forward to help, they could all be overcome."

One thing I have learned, during the campaign and in my first year as Governor, is that people of good will have come forward, all over Oregon...

In Deschutes County, they came forward to develop "clean and sober" support groups in each of the four high schools in the county...

In Jackson County, they came forward with a comprehensive teen parent program of education, job training, child care, transportation, and health care referral...

In Baker County they came forward and started "Just Say No" clubs in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades of the nine elementary schools in the county...

In Columbia County, they came forward to provide before and after school care for 30 kindergarten through 6th grade children who have no parental supervision before and after school...

These people of good-will and dedication have convinced me that the problems we face are no match for the sweat and sacrifice so many Oregonians are ready to make for our children.

Their message is simple, yet profound. It is so simple, it is revolutionary.

The message of Oregonians is not only that we are prepared to be stewards of our children, not only will we care for ourselves as we have cared for the land -- we will do it ourselves...together, in common cause...in public - private partnership that recognizes our shared obligations and our shared responsibilities.

...Why do I ask Tom Gonzales of the Public Broadcasting Commission to care about dropouts? Why do I ask Gertrude Currier of the Senior Services Commission?

Because this state cannot afford to waste the 25 percent of our young people who are not graduating from high school. We will need the talent and skills of all our citizens in the quality workforce of the future, and to create the ideas that create new jobs.

Why do I ask Joseph Wade of the Black Affairs Commission, and Janice Wilson of the Job Training Coordinating Council, and Alice Faust of the Women's Commission to care about drug abuse?

Because on the average, Oregon's young people use marijuana, cocaine, and amphetamines earlier, more frequently, and in larger quantities than do their counterparts nationally.

The cost of drug and alcohol abuse in Oregon is staggering. A conservative estimate puts the figure at \$1.5 billion annually. But you cannot put a price tag on the personal devastation experienced by Oregon families with children who use and abuse alcohol and other drugs.

Oregon's reputation is that this is a liberal state when it comes to tolerating drugs:

The Marijuana Initiative is on network news...

We are the only state in the West that has not eliminated the sale of drug paraphernalia...

Oregon is the third largest producer of the high potency THC content marijuana...

And we are one of the leading states in the production of illegal methamphetamine.

...The truth we must face is that neither laws nor sanctions nor money alone will do the job. We will begin the long march towards victory only when each of us wakes up and says, "No one else will do it for us -- no government program will provide the solution -- I have to take action."

We are all stewards of the child; we all have a stake in the outcome.

And if we each stay in our own government agencies and deal only with our own agendas we will fail -- not just as members of state government, but as members of society.

Our challenge will not be met in one grand gesture.

But together we can build a Children's Agenda brick by brick from the bottom up. For my part, I am going to take the Governor's Office on the road. I am going to where the ideas and commitment are -- in your towns and schools, churches and civic organizations...To reach out to individual citizens, to business and other groups to seek the best ideas, the best of local and private efforts now in place. We will match the enthusiasm and talent of those ready to help with the ideas and opportunities of those trying to help.

When we find a local effort that shows promise of keeping kids off drugs or of better preparing them for the future, we will help find ways to fulfill the promise.

We will probe, test, experiment. We will spread the successes to other communities. At times, we will fail, but we will learn from our failures. And we will try again.

...But we must not succumb to the effort to define this issue by the size of our pocketbooks. If we do, we will fail because Oregon's income is lower than the national average. In wealthier states than Oregon, states that spend far more than we, the same, identical problems exist. They were unable to spend their way to success; there is no reason to think we could either. I am not asking for tax dollars; I am asking for your commitment -- our commitment.

We will go to counties that are ready to pioneer new approaches and make a deal with them. You devise a program for dealing with the problems of children in your community that is better than what we do now, and we will lump together the money we now spend through different programs into one pot and try out your better way.

The war for the hearts and minds of our children will be fought on many fronts:

We want 90% of entering primary students to graduate from high school, or be otherwise properly placed, by 1990...

We want children to be healthier and better prepared for the first grade...

We want them to master basic skills in elementary school...

We want there to be less child abuse, less delinquency, less teenage pregnancy, and less substance abuse...

We want less idle time and more work experience.

We want our youth to be ready to enter the workplace, to put their talents to use in fulfilling careers...

And perhaps most importantly, we want all Oregon children to believe in their hearts, that their communities care about them and want them to succeed...and that when they need a helping hand, a caring adult will be at their side.

You in this audience represent a system of self-government the people of Oregon can be proud of -- a system made up of men and women -- from different racial and ethnic backgrounds -- from every region of the state. Men and women committed to acting together to serve the public interest.

For if a well-educated workforce leads us to compete successfully in the world marketplace of the future, it won't be a triumph of governors or government acting alone...

~~If the toxin of drug abuse is to be washed from our land in our time, it won't be a triumph of any person acting alone.~~

It will be your triumph -- a victory of free men and women who believe that reason, compassion, and commitment are the best means of fulfilling our responsibilities to one another and of giving meaning to our lives.

**Remarks
Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Clubs, Eugene
April 19, 1988**

You did not come together today because of me. You are here because you care about our children.

You care about the fourth grader who is given drugs, not by the pusher on the street corner, but by his own parents...

You care about the baby born at such a low birthweight that it is twice as likely to suffer mental retardation, deafness, blindness, and learning disabilities....

You care about the five year old who is sexually abused; who by the time he enters the first grade is already mentally, emotionally and physically damaged goods...

You care about the teenage mother who drops out of school, with little hope of every finding a decent job...

You care about the gifted child who cannot find an outlet for her creativity and innate talent.

By themselves, these stories tug at the heartstrings. But taken together and multiplied many times over, they represent social dynamite.

80% of all felons were abused as children.

100% of all sexual offenders in the Oregon state penitentiary were abused as children.

50% of all welfare recipients are high school dropouts.

In 1986, 2000 babies were born in Oregon with low birthweight -- the leading cause of death in the first year of life and a major cause of childhood disability.

The Children's Agenda is a gut check, a conscience check, a common sense check. If you look at the things you can spend time and money on in this society, nothing is more important than children. You can build all the weapons systems you want and worry about the Soviets coming over the border -- it is not as important as this issue. If we don't deal with this problem, we won't have to worry about the Soviets -- we will self-destruct anyway.

Children who entered kindergarten last September are the class of 2000. But 25 - 30% won't graduate...they won't pay taxes -- they'll take yours. It is not an intelligent way to run a nation.

~~Why would you create a circumstance in which no matter how hard you work, somebody is out there trying to take it away from you -- through welfare, drug rehabilitation, prisons. Or just climbing in your window and stealing your property, your sense of security and well-being.~~

75% of the people in this country have a hard enough time taking care of themselves and their families without taking care of the 25% who won't make it through high school; who won't have the skills to take care of themselves.

So even if you don't like me pulling at your heartstrings, I think you should object to someone else pulling at your pocketbook.

**Remarks
Morrison Center Awards Banquet
Portland
October 19, 1988**

Look at the world for moment through the eyes of a first grader...

I was born a drug addict because my mother was a drug addict.

For the first six months of life I felt hot; I shook all over; I couldn't stop crying.

I guess I made my mom and dad mad -- they shook me and slapped me to make me stop crying.

After that, they left me alone...or else they beat me.

No one reads stories to me; no one talks to me -- they just yell.

Sometimes they give me drugs.

And now I'm in the first grade and I can't sit still, I can't think, and I can't learn. And the teacher doesn't have time to help me.

Everybody is mad at me.

And I am mad at everybody.

In Oregon, there are thousands of children growing up in the shadows -- throwaway kids destined for lives of defeat and despair long before they reach the schoolhouse door.

The fastest growing expense in the Children's Services Division of your state government is the demand for foster care -- it has increased by 25 percent since 1985.

Many of these foster homes are for children between the age of birth and three.

Why?

Because drug addicted parents are incapable of caring for their children -- many of whom inherited their mother's drug addiction in the womb.

Over 250 cases of babies born drug addicted have been reported to CSD since 1986.

In Multnomah County, the number of drug-affected babies born this year is 50 percent higher than last year's rate.

And CSD believes the figures are underestimated.

Rural areas are beginning to report drug-exposed newborns and the number will rise as doctors become familiar with the symptoms of addiction in newborn children.

Were these children born equal? Not on your life.

These are babies poisoned at birth. When such babies do survive, what kind of lives will they live?

There is only one road that leads to adult self-sufficiency: The road that leads to the schoolhouse door.

But addicted and abused children cannot learn. And when they grow up, they cannot work.

But they can have babies. And the cycle repeats itself.

...We know as we meet tonight that our children and grandchildren who do graduate will have to excel to compete with a United Europe, Japan and the rest of Asia.

And they must do it while carrying on their backs as many as 30 percent of their peers.

It is an incredible burden to ask them.

But I am convinced that we can significantly reduce the odds of that happening.

We can join compassion with long-term self-interest.

We can do it if we are willing to invest ourselves in the solution.

Carson McCullers once wrote that "The hearts of small children are delicate organs. A cruel beginning in this world can twist them into curious shapes."

We can give all our children a better beginning in this world. We can aim our resources at the early years from birth to six -- before failure and despair get a stranglehold on young lives.

Fewer early pregnancies; improved prenatal care for young and poor expectant mothers; early detection and treatment of health and language problems; improved parenting skills...

I have seen it happen in communities all over Oregon.

In Wallowa County, a monthly Baby Weigh-in and Development Clinic checks growth and screens motor, language, and cognitive skills of children between three and 36 months.

The service is free and available to every child born in the county.

In Jefferson County, the Teen Parent Program serves pregnant and parenting teenagers.

In Lane County, the Relief Nursery provides therapeutic preschool for low income children who have been abused or neglected.

The list goes on and on. And the one thing they all have in common is that they don't have very much money.

They survive because people in the community were willing to invest themselves in our children's future.

There are heroes in Oregon -- men and women who are not afraid to stand up and say, "I will take responsibility for what is happening to our children...I will do what I can to help."

Some are here with us tonight.

But before I talk about them and the Morrison Center, I want to say a few words about the education of a Governor.

If there was such a thing as a Children's Agenda at the beginning of my administration, it was to create opportunity for young people in Oregon. To create good jobs so that Oregon schools would no longer be a farm system for out-of-state employers.

The Student Retention Initiative was the first tentative nibble at a larger agenda designed to help young people stay in school.

And then, about a year ago, I visited the Gateways program for alcohol and drug abuse in Roseburg. I talked with kids who had smoked marijuana daily; children who were addicted to crack and methamphetamine -- who had dealt drugs to support their habit.

And I talked to children who got their drugs not from the stereotypical pusher at the playground, but from their own mothers and fathers.

Last January, in a speech to the Portland City Club I said that it was time for this generation of Oregonians to become stewards of the child.

I thought I would have to spend six months on the road convincing Oregonians of the necessity of a Children's Agenda.

I was wrong.

As a French politician once said, "There go my people. I must find out where they are going so I can lead them."

So beginning in March, I went on the road, two or three days a week, all across Oregon.

I went to where the ideas and the commitment are; I went to where our strength and vitality lie -- in the community.

And in April I came to the Morrison Center's Day Treatment Program for Young Children.

I was reminded of a quote from Camus that Robert Kennedy used: "Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children."

I was told of a young boy whose parents had abandoned him. The police found him a week later, at home, eating out of a two-foot-high pile of garbage. With two dogs lying dead on either side of him...

I saw photos of a 4-year-old boy, black and blue from head to foot...with 11 broken bones...fingers deliberately pulled back and broken...sexually abused...bite marks.

Would any of us have the strength and courage to overcome such torture?

Yet with love and attention -- and a carefully designed program -- the remarkable people at the Morrison Center can lift the bruised and beaten child to a normal life.

The staff at the center have a name for their children -- "little sponges" -- because they soak up all the love you can give them.

Out of 45 children who have undergone treatment, all but 11 have gone on to regular schooling...28 are in adoptive homes.

But day treatment serves only 20 children at a time -- out of 250 who qualify in Multnomah County. That leaves at least 230 boys and girls who will cost taxpayers a great deal of money over their lifetimes.

Troubled lives must be unraveled and rewoven thread by thread -- it can take years of work. Wouldn't it be easier and cheaper to provide families and children with help before the damage begins?

...And to those of you who are considering whether to invest yourselves in the Children's Agenda...

Big problems can make us feel very small. In the face of the nuclear arms race, the Greenhouse Effect or the budget deficit the feeling that we can make a difference is diminished.

That is not true of the Children's Agenda. There is great opportunity for leadership -- opportunity to make a real difference in the life of a child.

We Oregonians point with pride to our clean rivers, public beaches, and parks, and we say, "This is our work."

I say to you that the day will come when Oregonians will point with pride to a generation of children grown healthy, strong and independent, and say, "This too is our work."

Ladies and gentlemen, we must not be afraid to invest in our future.

And our future will always be in our children.

Remarks, Children's Budget Proposals
Press Conference, Salem
November 28, 1988

The challenges our children face cannot be met by government edict alone. Nor can we buy our way to success.

In Oregon we have chosen another path.

A path that begins in our communities and ends in Salem, instead of the other way around.

The budget proposals we are announcing today are NOT the Children's Agenda. They define the state's role as a partner in what is essentially a community-based effort.

I am asking the Legislature to consider budget and legislative proposals designed to encourage more Oregonians to reach out and help a child.

And the state will help by providing developmental and financial assistance...

...We do not have to change everything to make a difference...we do not have to wait for more studies to know what to do.

It will make a difference if we reduce the number of low-weight births...

It will make a difference if we detect and treat vision and hearing problems...

It will make a difference if we educate more children to the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

As I travel around the state, listening to those who deal with children's problems, the one message I hear over and over is that earlier help is better help. It is more economical and more effective.

That is why my budget recommendations focus resources on a Great Start program designed to help children from zero to age six.

We know that a great start can prevent damaging outcome: children having children...leaving school illiterate and unemployable...getting in trouble with the law.

We have a common stake in preventing these damaging outcomes -- the public burden is enormous and growing larger.

This is not a regional issue...these problems exist in every town, in every city, in every county in Oregon.

Nor is this a partisan issue. Democrats and Republicans alike recognize that prevention is a bargain compared with the current cost of our failures.

The Children's Agenda is a long-term campaign. It will be modified over the years as we move upward in age groups receiving special attention.

But one thing will not change - the counties and the communities will remain the major actors.

Finally, it seems as if children are at the top of every politician's agenda.

But all too often children are forgotten after the speeches and announcements and press conferences.

Oregonians will not let this issue disappear. It speaks to our deepest values. It defines who we are as a people.

In Oregon we are drawing the line: No more throwaway children -- no more wasted lives.

This is an agenda for action...one that speaks to your heart and speaks to your head.

It is not for children at risk of failure. It is for children with great potential to succeed -- in other words, it is for ALL children.

There is no sounder investment in the future.

**Remarks
One Church, One Child Kickoff
November 30, 1988**

One Church, One Child is not just a program. And it is not charity.

It is a challenge -- a challenge to live our faith and to do God's work here on Earth.

...The state can provide these children with shelter. The state can provide them food and clothing.

But the state cannot provide what every child needs and deserves: love, affection, understanding, a home.

The state is not a family.

The Bible says that God setteth the solitary in families.

But we know that to expect God to do everything while we do nothing is not faith but folly.

We must take responsibility for our children -- as a community, as a church, as an individual -- or else condemn them to lives of defeat and despair.

If we reach out to these young people we can change their futures.

If we reach out we can change the future of Oregon.

...I think we are all tired of being taken for granted...tired of being asked to do too little -- to care too little.

The Lord asks us to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

Do we dare ask any less of ourselves?

Reach out and save a child...

Reach out and rescue the future.

Reach out and you shall see delivered -- as in the Biblical days -- a force joining God's will and mankind's best aspirations.

...Today we plant the seeds of a vision...a vision that will one day bear this fruit -- that all our sons and daughters -- whatever the color of their skin -- will have the chance to fulfill their potential as children of God.

Remarks
Oregon Youth Conservation Corps Reception
November 30, 1988

Oregonians point with pride to our clean rivers and roadways public beaches, and parks. All the things that make this the best corner of God's Earth.

Add Youth Conservation Corps to that list...

There are many reasons for the success of the YCC.

First, it is firmly rooted in our belief that this land is a special place to be treasured and protected.

The land fills our senses; its gifts sustain us; it touches our deepest spiritual beliefs.

But to maintain these benefits we must give in equal measure.

Over the year we have learned this lesson and are correcting our past mistakes. Tonight, you have seen several examples of the fine work our Oregon Youth Conservation Corps members accomplished this last summer.

Some of the results are quite dramatic. You have seen pictures of the Youth Corps coastal stream repair projects. In the past few years, fish have returned in record numbers to these streams.

A Youth Corps crew has worked for two years on the lower Deschutes River. By managing the grazing of cattle along the river bank, vegetation has been restored where it once was brown and dry. Destruction caused by this summer's fires was contained by rapid response from our fire crews.

But there is still much work to be done. Many of our streams remain dry, fish remain absent from many areas, and erosion continues to mar many once beautiful landscapes.

Our children must not repeat our mistakes, but must continue to care for and repair our land. They must develop a commitment to conservation and enlightened resource management practices. They must learn to work with others in harmony to this end.

And that is the second reason for the Corp's success -- it recognizes the human face in the landscape. The Corps create jobs for our youth, helps preserve and manage our environment teaches good work habits and instills commitment to conservation.

...There are more than 100 businesses, organizations and individuals who have donated to the Youth Corps so far and, if I had time, I would mention all of you by name. I will simply say to those of you who have donated, thank you. We need all of you for the Youth Corps to continue to succeed. And the Corps will only succeed if government works in partnership with communities, private businesses, and individuals to reach our goals.

On Monday I announced my budget and legislative proposals for the state's role in a Children's Agenda for Oregon. I propose expansion of the state's role in the Youth Conservation Corps partnership by \$1.6 million, to be funded through an amusement device fee.

The Youth Conservation Corps is a very important part of a Children's Agenda for Oregon. When I traveled throughout our state this spring and summer to listen to Oregonians' concerns about their children, at every stop I heard that our children need summer jobs. The Corps creates jobs in places where few jobs for young people exist. Places like Condon, Monument and Alsea.

The Youth Corps creates for youngsters at a very critical time in their lives -- during their transition from childhood to the time when they take their places as full-fledged members of their communities. We must provide them with care and attention during this important time in their lives.

This is why I ask you to invest in this program. It is an investment in our youth, in our land, in our communities and in our future. It will help produce the kind of citizens that will keep our land and communities vital.

**Remarks
Children's Conference, Portland
December 7, 1988**

Last August, the nationally syndicated columnist, Neal Pierce, wrote about Oregon's Children's Agenda:

"Is it for real?," he asked. "A critic could accuse Goldschmidt of purveying a version of spongy Reaganesque exhortation to voluntarism.

"But the Oregonian children crusade," he continued, "can be read also as a pioneering bid...to recreate the sinews of U.S. community support without turning the show over to new social-service professionals and prisons this society couldn't afford anyway."...

I refuse to buy into the cynical notion that one person cannot make a difference...

- Children respond to direct, personal involvement by adults
- Serve as mentors for students who are at risk.
- Provide work experience and paid jobs for teenagers.
- Provide a scholarship for the valedictorians in your community...to be used at a state university. In Nevada, one casino owner pays for all 53 valedictorians who choose to attend the University of Nevada.
- Allow and encourage pregnant employees time off with pay to attend prenatal physician visits.

- Add someone who would not otherwise be included to your childcare center...your health insurance plan...add a children's organization to your janitorial contract.
- Become involved in planning program strategies designed to increase school retention, improve attendance, improve grades.
- Recognize and reward students who demonstrate special progress in improving grades, increasing attendance.
- Provide opportunities for students and teachers to become exposed to a broader range of training opportunities and learning environments.
- Use business resources to leverage increased attention to the needs and problems of young people.
- Take a stand. Say loud and clear that existing dropout rates are unacceptable...the number of low weight births is unacceptable...drug and alcohol abuse is unacceptable.
- More than anything else, listen to what children are saying.

Remarks
Preparing for the Drug Free Years
February 9, 1989

If you end up, as Margie and I have with Becca and Josh, with drug-free children -- it's a mitzvah, a blessing.

It's not a magic gift of parenting. It's tough to be a kid these days. And it's tough to be a parent -- to know how to talk to your children about drug and alcohol abuse.

It takes hard work. And parents need help.

There is no time too early to help Oregon's families deal with this crisis.

When I listen to Oregon families, when I'm in their churches or synagogues, when I'm in their grade schools and child care centers, they ask me how we can win the war for the hearts and minds of our children.

That is why this project, "Preparing for the Drug Free Years," is so important. It helps parents help their children.

Testimony Before the House Subcommittee on
Family Preservation
Oregon Legislature
April 6, 1989

I am NOT here to convince you that Oregon children and Oregon families are in trouble. You already know that. The tragic results of drug and alcohol abuse, inadequate health care, and physical and mental abuse are brought home to you every day in your capacity as citizen legislators. The debate, to your credit, it not whether but how we should fight this war for the hearts and minds of our children.

State government today operates a number of programs for children. In general they work quite well; they provide valuable assistance to families and children in need throughout the state.

Some of you helped develop these programs, and you should be proud of the results -- results that are reflected in my recommended budget, which proposes a 17% increase in existing state programs for children.

But in my Children's Agenda proposals I also tried to address some of the limitations of state run programs. You've heard me say it before -- It is easy to look to government for all the answers to the problems that threaten our children's future. But creating a program and cutting a check cannot buy what is needed most: commitment, sacrifice, love and understanding. Government cannot mandate strengthened relationships among families, children and the communities in which they live.

There has to be a better way for the 90s; an Oregon way. I believe that the Children's Agenda -- with the Great Start component -- can be the answer.

I spent three months last year traveling the state, learning about the problems and opportunities facing our children. I came back more convinced than ever before that the Children's Agenda must be built from the bottom up, and not from the top down.

Communities across the state are making creative, effective efforts to help their children -- children whose names and faces they know personally. It is this commitment to real name and real faces that I believe is the key to our children's future.

It is why the citizens of Columbia County organized before and after school programs for latchkey children. It is why citizens in Lincoln County, using local community service tax dollars, started an after school program, which is now run by the schools and is now self-supporting.

It is personal commitment that resulted in Wallowa County's monthly baby weigh-in and development clinic that checks the growth and screens motor, language and cognitive skills of children between 3 and 36 months -- a clinic free to every child in the county.

And finally, it is personal commitment that enabled a small farming community like harrisburg to reduce the dropout rate in their schools to only two percent. The superintendent and the community together stood up and said, "No more throwaway kids." And it worked.

Great Start recognizes that state government has a role to play in nurturing local commitment and turning it into effective action. I am less concerned about how you choose to design the delivery of Great Start services, as I am that the program components: ONE, add up to a real partnership with the communities; TWO, recognize that earlier help is better help; and THREE, can be evaluated in such a way that successes are confirmed and built upon.

You will be hearing from individuals from ALL over Oregon, not only about their hopes and dreams, but about their successes in helping children. I am entirely confident that the process you have begun will result in a Great Start in life for more of Oregon's children.

**Statement Before Ways and Means Subcommittee
on Human Resources
Oregon Legislature
June 14, 1989**

The amount of money we're talking about for Great Start is not big; but the idea behind it is. It is the idea that we as individuals should no longer assign the solution of society's problems to someone else. It is the idea that with a little help, people can reach out and take responsibility for a child.

Great Start is based on these principles:

- Provide state support to local efforts and become a partner in those efforts
- Encourage and empower people to step forward and take ownership of the problem
- And when it comes to helping children, earlier help is better help

Great Start does not come to you in the form of a detailed blueprint. In some ways it is an experiment. But it is based on the hard evidence that communities across the state -- your communities -- are making creative, effective efforts to help their children -- children whose name and faces they know personally. I believe that encouraging such efforts is the best way to improve the chances that our children are successful.

And that is what Great Start is all about.

How can so much ride on so little money?

First of all, you cannot put a price tag on personal responsibility.

We have to look at new ways of doing things that won't bankrupt us. And, frankly, state government cannot continue to do it alone -- the public burden is enormous and it is growing.

Prenatal care is one example.

With the best of intentions we set out to help bring healthier babies into this world. In many ways we succeeded. But now 40% of the births in Oregon are state funded; and meanwhile we do very little to move those mothers, mostly young and single, toward independence. And we are not doing enough to help their children break that cycle of dependence.

Without community support for children, we might as well turn the whole show over to social service professionals and prisons. But there's just one problem with that solution: we can't afford it.

No one can claim that the Legislature's commitment over the years to families and children has been lacking. The Legislature has tried to put a floor of decency under every family and every child in Oregon.

General Fund contributions to the Department of Human Resources budget amounted to \$828 million in 1985; \$845 million in 1987; and we're going to break the billion dollar mark in 1989.

But frankly, even if we had an extra \$100 million or \$500 million to spend today, would we reduce the number of drug addicted mothers and their babies? Would we make a significant dent in child abuse statistics?

After spending all that money, we still could not say that we had changed the fundamental public attitude that someone else is responsible for our children; and that government programs don't work.

Great Start is far from the sum total of our dollar commitment to children.

But there will always be more pain than money -- unless we do a better job of preventing the pain.

We either empower communities, or the outcomes will continue to be unacceptable.

Politicians are often accused of the quick fix; of not looking at the long-term solutions to problems. Great Start represents a new way of finally getting a handle on our most urgent problems. We may not see the results of what we do here in two years or eight years or longer. But I am entirely confident that the process we have begun will result in a Great Start in life for more and more of Oregon's children.

**Remarks
Youth Services Commission Bill signing
July 26, 1989**

I am going to sign today two bills that I believe will help Oregonians build a better future for our children. But these bills should by no means overshadow the huge body of work that this Legislature put out on behalf of both children and families.

I have been saying that we must all reach out and take responsibility for our children. The men and women of the Legislature did exactly that.

Because of their work there will be new health clinics, added resources for family planning and prenatal care.

A doubling of the Head Start program,

Resources to screen infants at risk of developmental delays,

Added CSD caseworkers and funds to better train them,

Incentives for foster care parents,

Expanded support to help children with mental illnesses,

And the list goes on.

And for the first time, the State of Oregon has declared a policy for children, which reads: "Children are our future; healthy children and families are of fundamental importance to the vitality of Oregon; All children deserve love, respect and guidelines for responsible behavior; and Families should be supported and strengthened."

These are the words of Senate Bill 1018. In a few moments I will give them the force of law by adding my signature to the bill. SB 1018 also creates a coordinating council of state agencies that serve children, youth, and families; and directs them to prepare a unified children's budget. This group will ensure that state government is providing the most efficient and the most effective help possible.

The Legislature also recognized that state government alone cannot solve the problems facing our children. And so it chose to create a partnership with communities, to complement and to stimulate local efforts to help children.

HB 3466, which I will sign today, creates Great Start -- A program based on the idea that the commitment, sacrifice, love and understanding that children need most is provided best by individuals in the community, NOT by government. It is an idea that works, and I have seen it happening over and over again as I travel this state.

HB 3466 also establishes the Youth Services Commission to bring together under one group the responsibility for supporting community efforts aimed at children up to age 18. This group will also administer all of the state community grant programs, including the programs of the Juvenile Services Commission, the Student Retention Initiative and the new Great Start Program.