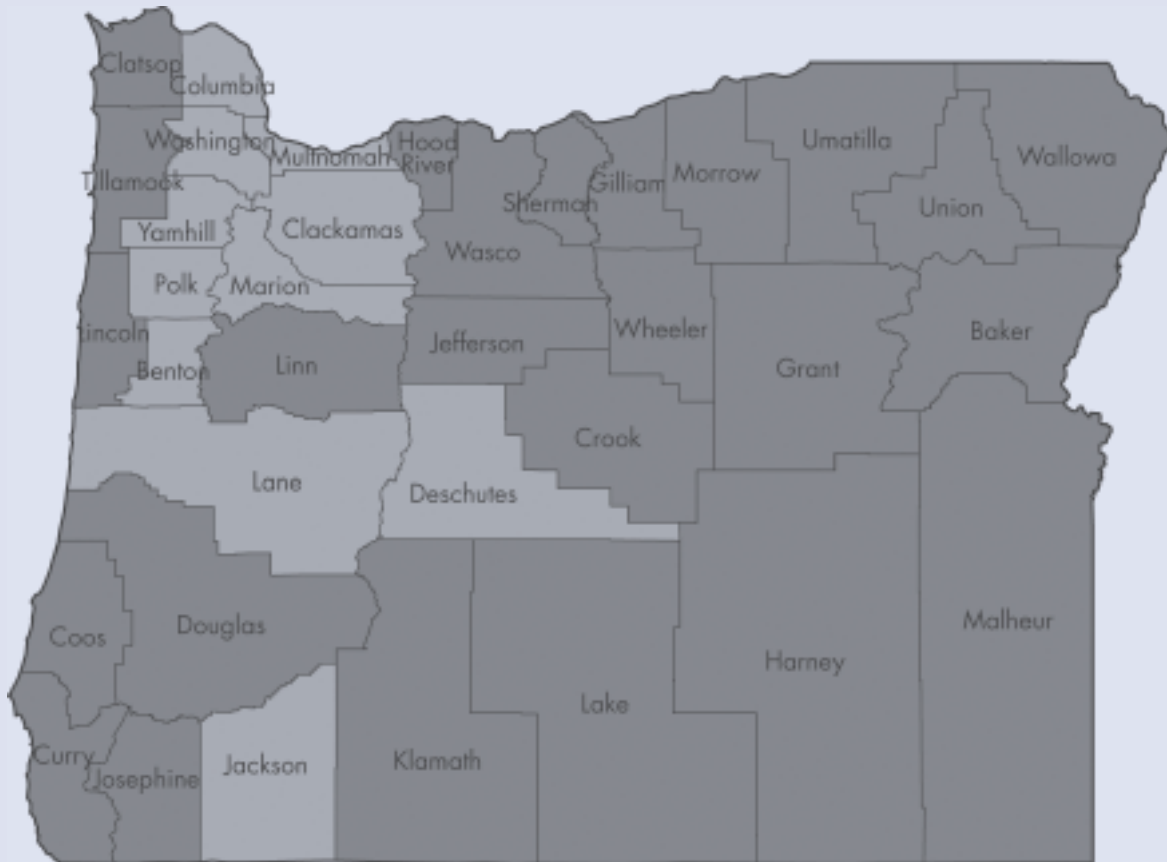


# Meth Abuse Threatens More Crime in Rural Oregon: Budget Axe Cuts Deep into Rural Oregon's Public Safety



A Report from FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS **OREGON**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *OREGON* is part of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, a national, bipartisan, nonprofit, anti-crime organization. The national organization has a membership of more than 2,500 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. The members take a hard-nosed look at what works -- and what doesn't work -- to prevent crime and violence. They then recommend effective strategies to state and national policy-makers.

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## Executive Summary

Rural communities across America face many challenges. Loss of decent-paying jobs in rural Oregon has led to hard times for many rural families. In rural Oregon, rising drug use, particularly methamphetamine, threatens the safety and well-being of our children and communities. Drug abuse leaves broken families, traumatized communities, and an increase in crimes committed by addicts.

While drug abuse increases in rural Oregon, Congress is debating severe budget cuts to law enforcement and investments in children proven to prevent crime. The 127 law enforcement leaders and violence survivors who are members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS OREGON and the more than 2,500 members of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS across the country believe that dangerous criminals must be put behind bars. But only locking up criminals won't spare victims the agony of crime.

We know that some of the most powerful weapons in the anti-crime arsenal are the investments in programs that help kids get the right start in life, so they become productive adults. Research shows that high-quality pre-kindergarten programs, like Head Start, quality child care programs, child abuse prevention programs, after-school programs, and juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs are proven to reduce crime by helping children get on track toward success.

Despite the pressing needs in rural Oregon, Congress is considering adopting the Administration's proposed budget and making sharp cuts in programs proven to reduce crime by helping children get a good start in life. With the leadership of Oregon Senators Smith and Wyden, the Senate recently rejected the proposed cuts to law enforcement and added \$7 billion for health and education programs. But there is still a big risk that the House of Representatives will endorse the Administration's proposed cuts and put proven investments in kids that cut crime on the chopping block. Hundreds of thousands of at-risk children across the nation would lose access to Head Start, child care, after-school, and juvenile delinquency interventions. At the end of five years, one out of seven children nationally would be cut from Head Start, one out of five from child care, and one out of 10 from after-school programs under the Administration's proposal. The proposed budget would lock in cuts through a "five-year cap" to these programs and others – such as law enforcement, education, health, and nutrition.

In Oregon, cuts to early education and after-school programs in 2011 alone would mean:

- 1,200 children cut from Head Start;
- 5,000 children cut from child care; and
- 1,400 children cut from after-school programs.

The Social Services Block Grant — which supports many services for abused and neglected children — would be reduced by \$500 million, from \$1.7 billion to \$1.2 billion. Federal foster care funding may be capped at a time when many communities are facing increased child abuse and neglect due to the drug addiction of parents. And nationally, juvenile delinquency interventions would also be cut nearly in half in one year alone.

Cuts to Head Start, child care, after-school programs, and other crime prevention programs would make it harder for children in rural Oregon to get the right start in life. These cuts would place all our communities at greater risk from crime and violence.

# Meth Abuse Threatens More Crime in Rural Oregon: Budget Axe Cuts Deep into Rural Oregon's Public Safety

## Introduction

Today's rural communities face many challenges. Across rural America, the same conditions that lead to crime increases in cities and metropolitan areas – rising drug use, high unemployment, increasing poverty, fewer jobs, and the failure of government to invest in crucial crime prevention strategies – are contributing to an increase in drug related crime. Eighty percent of the country's land area is classified as rural and contains much of our country's productive soil and natural resources. With a third of America's total population in rural areas, the health and wealth of rural areas affects the entire country. According to the nonpartisan Education Commission of the States: "What happens in rural communities might be the bellwether for the health of the nation."<sup>1</sup>

These economic and social challenges threaten the safety and well-being of children and families in rural Oregon. Increased drug abuse in rural Oregon puts children at greater risk of being abused or neglected by addicted parents. For teens in rural Oregon, growing up in communities with increasing substance abuse provides the wrong kinds of opportunities – for abuse, addiction, and criminal behavior.

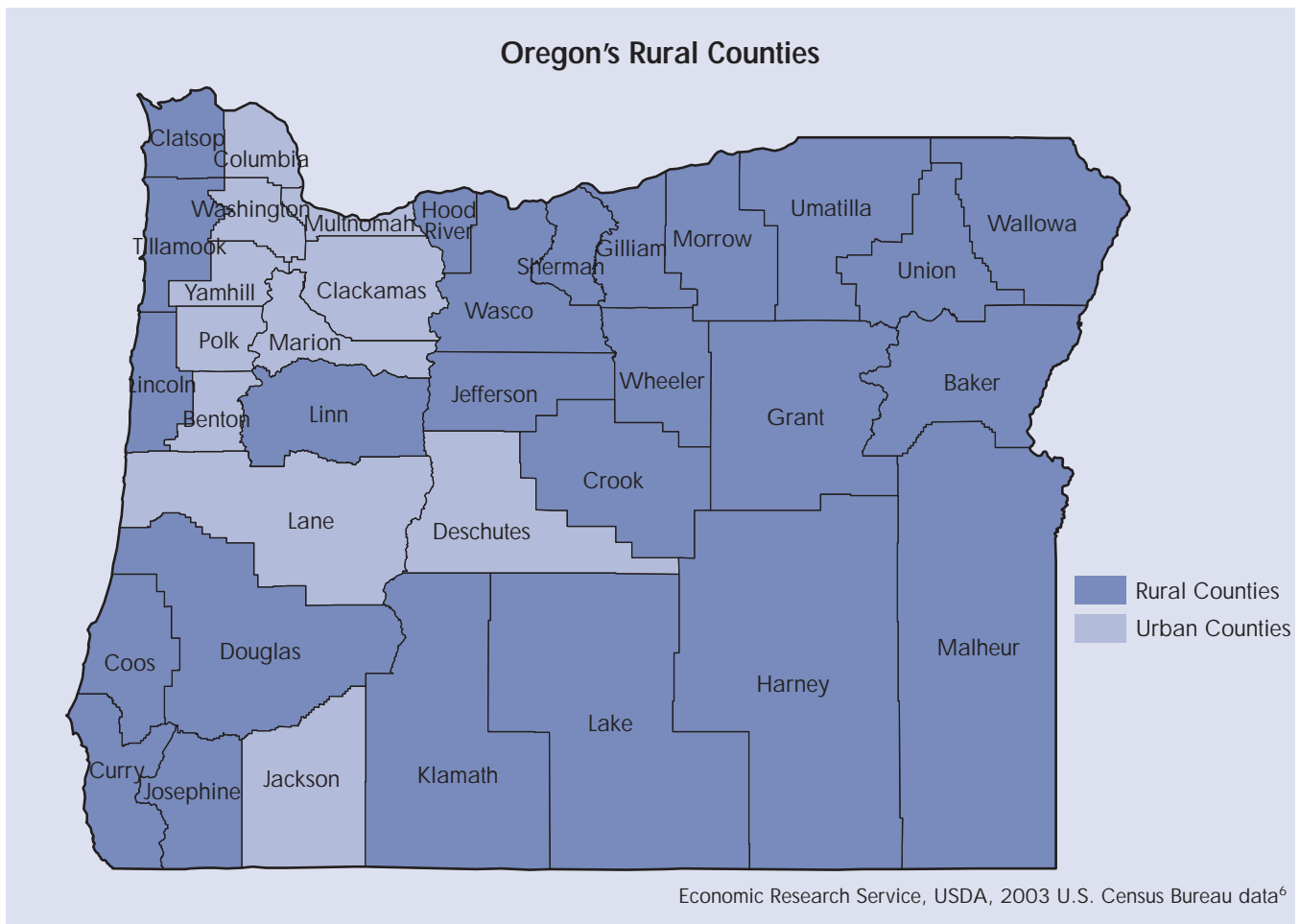
That's why law enforcement leaders in Oregon support increased federal investments in programs that help kids get on the right track

and avoid crime. In this report, we will review how decisions made in Washington, D.C. on budget issues can help or hurt Oregon's rural communities. Next, we will cover crime and drug use trends in Oregon and in rural America. We will review proven strategies to prevent crime by investing in children, ensuring that they get the right start in life. Along with proven strategies, we will review the proposed federal budget cuts which would limit our ability to prevent crime and address the needs of rural Oregon communities. Finally, we will provide an overview of federal tax policies that help working families address economic challenges facing rural Oregon families.

## Rural Oregon: An Overview

The situation in Oregon is similar to many other rural areas across the country.

- Rural areas of Oregon face higher rates of poverty than urban areas of the state. In 2003, the rural poverty rate was 13.8 percent, compared to 11.4 percent in urban counties.<sup>2</sup>
- The economic recovery that Oregon experienced since the recession of the 1980s has provided little benefit to rural Oregon. In the last 50 years, the state has experienced a dramatic shift in its manufacturing sector, with fewer jobs in



lumber and wood products.<sup>3</sup>

- While Oregon has diversified its urban economy into well-paying high technology and small manufacturing jobs, such well paying jobs have not been created to replace lost forestry and fishing industry jobs in rural areas.<sup>4</sup>
- While 250,000 more jobs have been created in rural areas of the state since the 1970s, the average worker in rural Oregon earns \$11,000 less than the average urban worker.<sup>5</sup>

These conditions generate profound stresses on Oregon's rural families that can often lead to drug abuse. One example, and a concern of many rural citizens, is that substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine, is on the rise in rural Oregon.

## Crime in Rural Oregon

Two of the most pressing problems in rural Oregon today are drug abuse and resulting crime. Overall crime increased in Oregon between 1999 and 2003, with an even greater increase in crime in the rural areas of the state.<sup>7</sup> Rising drug use, especially methamphetamine, is a looming threat of even higher rates of crime. Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski reported that methamphetamine abuse is a "factor in over 85 percent of property and identity theft crimes in Oregon."<sup>8</sup> Meth use is a major problem in Oregon, affecting rural communities throughout the state.

Also, the characteristics of violent crime in rural areas differ from urban crime in a significant way.<sup>9</sup> In rural Oregon, and in rural areas across the country, a person is less likely to be victimized by a stranger than in urban areas. For instance, the percentage of homicides

involving an intimate is three times greater in rural areas (19.1 percent) than in large cities (6.3 percent).<sup>10</sup> Correspondingly, the most common location for rural victims of violent crime is their home.<sup>11</sup> For law enforcement, this violent crime characteristic highlights the need for crime prevention strategies that intervene with families early rather than stopping crime later.

## Drug Abuse – A Rural Issue

Drug abuse is a real and growing concern among rural citizens. Drug abuse destroys lives and can devastate communities. According to a 2002 survey by the Kellogg Foundation, members of Congress from both political parties identified an increasing drug problem “as contributing to not only a decline in the traditional values so prevalent in rural communities, but also as a sign of growing despair in rural America.”<sup>12</sup>

In 2000, the Center of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (CASA) issued *No Place to Hide: Substance Abuse in Mid-Size Cities and Rural America*, the most comprehensive report on rural drug abuse. The report found drug use is no longer just a big city problem. In fact, in some rural areas, the problem is even more severe than in urban areas. Nationally, rural eighth graders are 104 percent more likely to use amphetamines, 50 percent more likely to use cocaine, 83 percent more likely to use crack cocaine, 34 percent more likely to smoke marijuana, and 29 percent more likely to drink alcohol than eighth graders in urban areas. By the twelfth grade, drug use rates in rural areas exceed those in large urban areas for cocaine, crack, amphetamines, inhalants, and alcohol.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Growing Methamphetamine Epidemic in Rural Oregon*

Methamphetamine addiction in many parts of the country has risen dramatically in the last five years. According to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by

the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the number of methamphetamine users addicted to stimulants has more than doubled. The survey found, “Past month methamphetamine users meeting criteria for stimulant abuse or dependence increased from 63,000 in 2002 to 130,000 in 2004.”<sup>14</sup>

No state may be harder hit by this epidemic than Oregon. *The Oregonian’s* analysis of state drug treatment data showed that Oregon “treats more people for meth addiction per capita than any other state in the country.”<sup>15</sup>

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recorded in its 2006 Oregon fact sheet that the seizure of meth labs in Oregon has declined.<sup>16</sup> In part this is due to new controls placed on the sale of over-the-counter cold medicines containing sudaphedrine. However, local small-time producers are not responsible for the bulk of methamphetamine consumption. Large-scale labs in California and Mexico are responsible for the majority of methamphetamine that is reaching the streets of big cities and small towns throughout the country. The DEA reports that, in Oregon, methamphetamine from these large labs “continues to flood the market.”<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, *The Oregonian* reported that nationwide “the most recent statistics on meth use show the number of addicts is rising, along with drug purity, suggesting the [large scale] traffickers have found other overseas sources of supply” for the original raw materials used to make methamphetamine.<sup>18</sup> The DEA confirms that the more addictive “crystal ‘ice’ methamphetamine is increasing in availability” in Oregon.<sup>19</sup>

Methamphetamine is highly addictive. The National Institutes of Health report that, “immediately after smoking or intravenous injection, the methamphetamine user experiences an intense sensation, called a ‘rush’ or ‘flash,’ that lasts only a few minutes and is described as extremely pleasurable. Users may become addicted quickly, and use it with

## The Walk Away Drug:

Before she left, 18-year-old Samantha Zeller stole across the silence of [her] home and taped a note to her mother's bedroom door. "I love you, don't worry," she wrote. When Rhonda Zeller awoke, she found her daughter had left something else behind: her 1-year-old son.

Samantha reappeared the day he turned 2, only to walk out again while the birthday boy cried for his mother to stay.

Each time she left, he would stand at the door screaming, "Mommy, no, don't go, please don't go." She would go anyway.

"That's when I knew how horrible this drug must be," Rhonda said. "She loved him more than life."

The drug was methamphetamine. Judges and child-protection workers call it the scourge of parenthood. They label it the "walk away" drug, because that's what parents do.

*David Olinger, December 28, 2004,  
Meth Crisis Soars in Colorado: Addicted parents neglect or abandon kids, Denver Post*

increasing frequency and in increasing doses."<sup>20</sup> Parents are exposing children to the drugs if they smoke the methamphetamine. They are also exposing their children to the poverty, conflicts and crime that so often engulf the lives of addicts. Far too often parents simply walk away and leave their children.

### *Rising Drug Abuse Threatens Oregon's Rural Children*

Parents' drug abuse often leads to child abuse and neglect and is a leading reason why children are placed in foster care. As meth use continues to rise in Oregon, demand for foster care homes has shot up 11 percent from 2003 to 2004, with more than half of all children coming from meth-involved households.<sup>21</sup>

Methamphetamine has been fueling abuse and neglect throughout Oregon. Much of the attention has been focused on children who live in houses where methamphetamine is being produced.

In a January 27, 2005 article titled "Methamphetamine scourge sweeps rural America," the Reuters news agency reported, "In thousands of cases, people have been caught cooking the highly toxic chemicals in homes where children were present, breathing the poisonous fumes."<sup>22</sup> National Public Radio reported in a story on "Meth Orphans" that when children are removed from these homes they "are scrubbed down and changed into clean clothes. They take nothing with them no books, no stuffed animals because everything is contaminated."<sup>23</sup>

Ramona Foley, Assistant Director for Children, Adults and Families at Oregon's Department of Human Services (DHS), said, "I think if we had some miracle cure, and we no longer had to deal with meth, it would likely reduce the [abuse and neglect] caseloads by at least half."<sup>24</sup> Counties throughout Oregon are overwhelmed. Gary Weeks, former Director of DHS said, "One reason foster families are getting larger is to absorb the growing number of endangered children, many of them the sons

and daughters of meth addicts or alcoholics and many of them facing their own medical or psychiatric problems as a result.”<sup>25</sup>

As the system goes beyond capacity, children are exposed to more risky homes. Two tragic cases in recent years in Clackamas County illustrate this point: one was a 5-year-old child who was found bruised and emaciated in an overcrowded and inadequately monitored foster home, and another was a toddler who died of head wounds after the state reunited him with his parents. Both children originally came into the system from homes affected by meth.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the state, over 70 percent of children removed from their homes for child abuse and neglect were removed due to parental drug abuse, with meth as the dominant drug.<sup>27</sup> Oregon’s rural counties had higher rates of children being removed from homes due to parental drug abuse than urban counties.<sup>28</sup> Rates of child removal due to parental drug abuse were 80 percent or more in one-third of Oregon’s rural counties — Lake, Wallowa, Morrow, Douglas, Coos, Wasco/Sherman, Clatsop, and Tillamook — but only one urban county, Washington, had a rate at 80 percent or more (see table to the right).<sup>29</sup>

Although state and federal drug programs have had some success in Oregon, curbing drug abuse in rural communities remains a great challenge. Rural communities face particular challenges in handling the consequences of drug abuse, such as increases in crime, child abuse and neglect, mental and physical health problems, and other social costs. Resources and expertise are spread thin. Not only are law enforcement agencies in rural areas underfunded, so too are prevention and treatment programs.

Investments in effective substance abuse treatment programs are critical to reducing drug abuse in rural Oregon. But more can be done before drug abuse starts. Supporting

### Percent of Drug Abusing Parents Among Children Removed From Their Homes for Abuse or Neglect

<b>Rural Counties</b>	Children removed for abuse or neglect	Percent with parental drug abuse
Lake	16	100%
Wallowa	10	90%
Morrow	15	87%
Douglas	145	86%
Coos	146	86%
Wasco/Sherman	55	84%
Clatsop	89	82%
Tillamook	20	80%
Linn	240	78%
Malheur	51	75%
Josephine	123	72%
Klamath	201	69%
Umatilla	97	68%
Baker	30	67%
Curry	33	67%
Lincoln	113	65%
Union	41	63%
Harney	35	63%
Grant	21	62%
Hood River	23	61%
Crook	34	44%
Jefferson	37	32%
Wheeler/Gilliam	6	17%

<b>Urban Counties</b>	Children removed for abuse or neglect	Percent with parental drug abuse
Washington	557	80%
Clackamas	318	78%
Lane	449	74%
Marion	801	74%
Benton	46	72%
Jackson	312	68%
Columbia	65	68%
Multnomah	1069	66%
Deschutes	84	62%
Polk	92	59%
Yamhill	64	36%

<b>State</b>	<b>5438</b>	<b>71%</b>
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Oregon Department of Human Services 2004 data. Reported in the Oregonian, August 28, 2005.

prevention programs, such as early childhood education, parent coaching, and after-school programs can reduce future drug abuse. To quote the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse report: “The most powerful solution of all is prevention.”<sup>30</sup>

## Investments in Children Cut Rural Crime

Investing in children is the key to safer communities. Making sure kids get the right start in life is vital to rural America and Oregon. Ignoring the unmet needs of disadvantaged kids is dangerous. Nobel Prize winning economist, James Heckman cautions:

Early disadvantage, if left untouched, leads to academic and social difficulties in later years. Advantages accumulate; so do disadvantages.<sup>31</sup>

Federal dollars invested in scientifically-based programs for children and teens can increase the “advantages,” decrease the “disadvantages,” and prevent a future life of crime for Oregon’s rural children. However, there is not enough federal support to meet the need.

## Child and Teen Programs – Rural Challenges

There are unique challenges to providing programs for children and teens in rural areas. Along with resources being spread thin, one of the biggest obstacles in rural areas is transportation. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, rural low-income households are three times more likely than non-low-income rural

households to be without a car. Public transportation reaches just 60 percent of rural counties in America, making it very difficult for many low-income rural households to access work and outside services.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is not enough simply to set up high-quality children and teen programs in rural communities. Parents must have a way of getting their children to and from a program.

The federal government has taken some steps to provide public transportation in rural areas. For example, the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program provides necessary transportation to welfare recipients and low-income residents. The service includes transport for health care, education, service agencies, and child support. But costs per rider remain high due to low populations and long distances in rural areas. These challenges must be addressed when discussing kids programs that reduce crime in rural Oregon.

## Budget Cuts to Programs That Keep Kids From Becoming Criminals Will Hurt Rural Oregon

Despite the needs of families in rural Oregon, Congress is now considering the Administration’s budget proposal that would make substantial cuts to programs proven to reduce crime by helping children get the right start in life. While the Senate recently rejected

**Proposed Federal Budget Cuts in Fiscal Year 2011**

Program	Proportion Cut	Nationally	Oregon
<b>Head Start*</b>	Almost 1 in 7	130,000 children cut	1,200 children cut
<b>Child Care* (CCDBG)</b>	Almost 1 in 5	400,000 children cut	5,000 children cut
<b>After-school** (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC)</b>	Almost 1 in 10	140,000 children cut	1,400 children cut

\*compared to FY 2006  
 \*\*compared to FY 2005

Based on Administration FY 07 Budget, and Office of Management and Budget Projection

the proposed cuts to law enforcement and added \$7 billion for health and education programs under the leadership of Oregon Senators Smith and Wyden, there is a serious risk that the U.S. House of Representatives will endorse the Administration's proposed cuts and put proven investments in kids that cut crime on the chopping block. The budget proposal calls for cuts to Head Start, child care and after-school funding, cutting child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment funding, capping foster care funding, and cutting juvenile justice prevention and intervention funding nearly in half.

The federal budget cuts currently being proposed would, in 2011, cut almost one in every seven children from Head Start, almost one in five children from receiving child care assistance, and almost one in 10 children from after-school programs.<sup>33</sup>

### **Cutting Head Start and Quality Child Care Programs For At-risk Children Would Increase Crime**

Head Start is America's premier early childhood education program for low-income 3 and 4 year olds. The proposed budget would cut \$26.5 million from Head Start in Oregon between 2007 and 2011.<sup>34</sup> In 2011 alone, nearly 1,200 Oregon children would be cut from the program.

Research backs up what law enforcement professionals know from experience: this cut would increase crime in the state. Studies show that at-risk kids who attend high-quality preschool programs are less likely to commit crimes and abuse drugs as adults compared to similar children who do not attend preschool.

Consider the evidence:

The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation conducted a study of the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan starting in 1962. With a high-quality one- to

two-year long educational program, the Perry program is now considered the model of early childhood educational programs. The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation found that 3 and 4 year olds from low-income families who were randomly assigned to a control group were five times more likely to become chronic lawbreakers by age 27 than children who were assigned to the program.<sup>35</sup> By age 40, the children denied high-quality pre-kindergarten were more than twice as likely to become career criminals with more than 10 arrests and twice as likely to be arrested three or more times for a violent crime.<sup>36</sup>

Children who attended the Perry Preschool were also less likely to become involved in drug-related crimes. By age 40, those who did not attend high-quality pre-kindergarten were four times more likely to be arrested for drug felonies and almost seven times more likely to be arrested for possession of dangerous drugs.<sup>37</sup>

The long-term benefits of quality pre-kindergarten are evident. Unfortunately, rural children are only two-thirds as likely as their urban counterparts to attend a center-based early education program, with 30.4 percent of rural children and 45.5 percent of urban children attending center programs other than Head Start.<sup>38</sup> In addition to lack of funding, lengthy distances and the high cost of transportation make quality pre-kindergarten inaccessible to many rural children. To address the problem of inadequate access for early childhood education programs in rural Oregon will take new investments to provide more care, but also strategies to ensure affordable transportation and appropriate center locations.

Head Start supports comprehensive early education, social and emotional development, parent involvement, and physical and mental health services. Unfortunately, Head Start is so under-funded that it only serves 60 percent of

the eligible 3 and 4 year olds in Oregon.<sup>39</sup> Since 1988, Head Start services in Oregon have been funded by both the federal Head Start program and state dollars. *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* combines state and federal funding into one seamless program, and requires the same rigorous federal Head Start Performance Standards that help ensure quality services for children and families.<sup>40</sup> From 2003 to 2005, Oregon invested \$53.5 million in state dollars for Head Start in addition to the federal Head Start program funds of \$99,000,000 to serve Oregon's needy children over the two-year period, totaling \$152.5 million.<sup>41</sup> Between 2003 and 2005, *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* served 19,094 children in 658 classrooms in all 36 counties. But an estimated 6,400 children did not receive the program in 2005 due to lack of funding.<sup>42</sup>

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was designed to provide child care subsidies for low- and moderate-income working families earning too little to purchase adequate child care without help. Unfortunately, federal funding is so inadequate that six out of seven of the eligible families remain unserved. As is the case nationally, CCDBG can provide help to only one in seven eligible children in Oregon. Oregon received \$59.3 million in CCDBG funds in 2004, helping an average of 21,200 children in Oregon each month (see Appendix).<sup>43</sup>

Clearly, neither Head Start nor CCDBG has the funds needed to serve all eligible children. Many families qualify for both programs but are receiving neither. The proposed budget cuts will deny even more Oregon children the opportunity to benefit from these valuable programs which promote children's development and prevent crime.

Cuts to Head Start funding will hit hard in rural communities especially, since children in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to have attended Head Start as children in non-rural areas. A new analysis of the Early Childhood

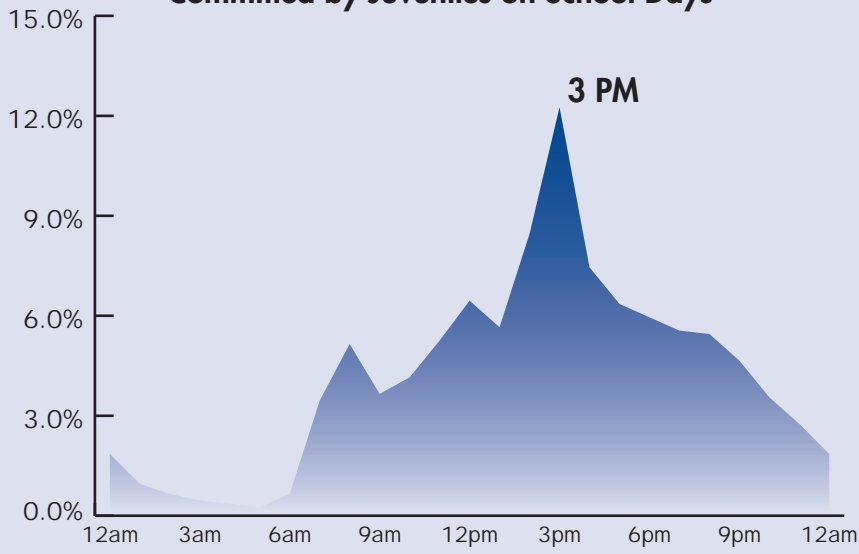
Longitudinal Survey explored the care and development of young children in rural and non-rural settings nationwide. This study found that 17.1 percent of rural children attended Head Start in the year prior to kindergarten compared with only 8.7 percent of non-rural children.<sup>44</sup> *Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten* provides Head Start services in rural communities, serving every county in the state.<sup>45</sup> But Oregon Head Start agency staff report that due to cost-saving measures resulting from prior cuts, they may be forced to cut many programs to half-day instead of making less drastic changes.<sup>46</sup> For the low-income parents whose children are in Head Start and who work regular jobs, that will create the added challenge of finding, paying for, and transporting children to additional sites each day.

### **Cutting Almost One Out of 10 Children Or Teens from After-School Programs Would Increase Crime**

After-school programs help rural teens stay on the right track. On school days, national data shows that the hours from 3 to 6 PM are the peak hours for teens to commit crimes, become victims of crime, smoke, drink or use drugs. High-quality after-school programs can transform these hours of soaring crime and drug use into hours of constructive, supervised activities.

For example, Boys & Girls Clubs have a long history of delivering results.<sup>47</sup> In one study conducted in several U.S. cities, five housing projects without Boys & Girls Clubs were compared to five receiving new clubs. At the beginning, drug activity and vandalism were the same. But by the time the study ended, the projects without the programs had 50 percent more vandalism and scored 37 percent worse on drug activity. Among kids with prior histories of arrest, those who did not participate in San Francisco's Bayview Safe Haven after-school program were twice as likely to be arrested during the six-month

### Hourly Percent of Serious Violent Crime Committed by Juveniles on School Days\*



\* Murder, violent sexual assaults, robbery, and aggravated assault.  
 Source: Fox, J.A. (2003). Time of day for youth violence (ages 10-17), 1999. Boston: Northwestern University. Adapted from 1999 National Incident-Based Reporting System data.

to 350 students home every day. A recent study of the program revealed that students who attend the program are doing much better in school. Students with a “C+” average increased their grades to a “B” average.<sup>49</sup>

A similar program in the rural community of Washtucna, Washington, provides kids with a stable “home away from home.” Called Bridging the Gap of Isolation, this 4-H after-school program provides access to computers and the opportunity to build relationships with caring adults. Just a year after the program started, the local school called the police

initial intervention period as program participants. Among kids with no prior histories of arrest, those who did not participate were three times more likely to be arrested during that same intervention period.<sup>48</sup>

However, transportation is often a barrier to providing access to after-school programs to rural teens. It is often difficult for families in isolated communities to provide transportation for their children to and from after-school programs, especially if the program is not on school grounds. In addition to the problems of geography, rural areas often must also address a lack of private partners and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff for after-school programs.

Despite these challenges, many after-school programs in rural communities are able to meet to needs of kids. In rural Edmonton, Kentucky, for example, the After School On Track program helps about 400 students every day. Not only does the program provide a stimulating and safe after-school environment, but it also pays for transportation, bringing 300

department only three times, compared to 32 calls the year before.<sup>50</sup>

Federal 21st Century Community Learning Center Program grants also help schools provide quality after-school programs, but funding is limited. In 2004, \$9.5 million in 21st Century Community Learning Center funds were awarded in Oregon.<sup>51</sup> However, 21 Oregon communities that applied for 21st Century Community Learning Center grants did not receive funding, representing a \$4.8 million shortfall in funding, denying after-school programs to thousands of children.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, neither state and local funds, nor efforts of private and non-profit programs come close to fulfilling the needs of Oregon’s teens, including rural teens.

If the proposed cuts are approved by Congress, in 2011, nearly 1,400 Oregon children and teens would be dropped from after-school programs.<sup>53</sup> Cuts of this magnitude would have serious consequences to Oregon’s rural communities.

## Cuts to Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Would Increase Crime

Federal funds in Oregon that provide services to prevent child abuse and neglect face proposed cuts. For example, the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), the federal government's single largest support for services to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect, would be cut by \$500 million nationally. SSBG provided Oregon with \$20.7 million in 2006.<sup>54</sup>

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) also provide Oregon with support for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Funding is used to improve state child protective services and community-based prevention services. Funding for PSSF would be cut nationally by \$41.3 million over 5 years. Proposed CAPTA funding would be cut nationally by \$44 million over 5 years. PSSF provided Oregon with \$5.2 million in 2004, and CAPTA provided the state \$270,161 in 2004.<sup>55</sup>

These federal programs provide funds for a variety of child abuse and neglect prevention or treatment services. One of the most effective approaches to child abuse and neglect prevention, also funded in part by these federal programs, is in-home parent coaching.

In-home parent coaching, also known as home visitation, is another way to help rural children get the right start in life. In-home parent coaching programs reduce child abuse and neglect. The in-home programs offer continuing parent coaching, emotional support, and referrals for substance abuse, mental health, housing, or other services. By building a close relationship with new parents, parent coaches can help at-risk families acquire the skills and knowledge they need, and help them make desired changes in their lives to provide a loving, safe, and enriching start in life for their new baby. Particularly in rural areas where parents may be isolated from center-based resources, it is valuable to have an approach

that can reach families in their own homes.

In-home parent coaching programs can significantly reduce child abuse and neglect and future crime. While most victimized children never become criminals, studies show that children who were abused or neglected are far more likely to be arrested as juveniles and to commit crimes as adults than children who were not abused or neglected.<sup>56</sup> The coaching by in-home visitors can save children's lives and help prevent children from becoming criminals.

An excellent example of this is the Nurse Family Partnership program. One study of a Nurse Family Partnership program in Elmira, NY, randomly assigned at-risk pregnant women to receive in-home visits by nurses. Beginning prenatally, and continuing until the children were two years old, the nurses coached mothers in parenting and other skills. Children of mothers in the program had 48 percent fewer substantiated reports of abuse or neglect than children of mothers not in the program. Put another way: in-home parent coaching services can prevent nearly half of all cases of abuse or neglect among at-risk children.<sup>57</sup> In addition, by the time the children reached age 15, mothers in the program had 61 percent fewer arrests than the mothers left out of the program and their children had 59 percent fewer arrests than the kids left out.<sup>58</sup>

Like pre-kindergarten programs, in-home parent coaching programs in rural areas also face challenges. Traveling lengthy distances poses a problem for the programs, especially during the winter months when road conditions may be hazardous. Finding accessible referral services in rural areas is sometimes difficult. The narrow range of service options often requires parent coaches to develop expertise in many areas. Funding for in-home parent coaching programs also falls short. Oregon has embraced the benefits of in-home parent coaching through their statewide Healthy Start program. However, due to a

2005 state budget cut, only about 40 percent of all new mothers in Oregon are offered such services.<sup>59</sup>

## **Cuts to Juvenile Offender Programs Would Increase Crime**

Another important concern for Oregon's rural teens is juvenile offender prevention and intervention. In fiscal year 2007, proposed overall juvenile justice funding in the U.S. Department of Justice would be cut 43 percent, from \$309 million to \$176 million.<sup>60</sup> The \$50 million in Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) funds allocated in 2006 would also be eliminated.

JABG helps promote tough intervention and results for kids in the justice system and prevent crime. JABG supports state and local juvenile crime intervention approaches, ranging from secure juvenile corrections facilities for some serious and violent offenders to effective community-based residential treatment programs for offenders who do not need to be locked up. It also provides substance abuse and mental health services for non-violent offenders remaining at home, and school safety programs. But this source of funding for Oregon's at-risk teens is small – just \$659,100 in 2004.<sup>61</sup>

Three well-researched programs that can be funded with JABG grants work with serious and violent juvenile offenders. The programs systematically provide the parents or foster parents of these youths with effective tools to better control their children's behaviors. Research shows that new arrests of youths in these programs have been cut by as much as half compared to youths not receiving this help.<sup>62</sup> One of the programs, Multi-Systemic Therapy showed it could cut arrests for substance abuse by 75 percent. Because of the sharp drops in new crimes, net savings to taxpayers for the three programs ranged from \$9,000 to \$31,000 for every youth placed in the programs.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the best efforts of Oregon's leaders, rural children will continue to be at a disadvantage without more federal support. Increased federal support for kids programs can decrease crime and drug abuse, and ultimately increase the quality of life in rural Oregon.

## **Federal Tax Policies Assisting Rural Oregon Families**

In addition to the federal funding that provides essential services to prevent crime, federal tax policies also have an impact on rural Oregon's children and families. Altogether, federal tax credits help families across the economic spectrum. But for working families struggling to make ends meet, federal tax credits make a big difference, making it easier for parents to provide some of the basics for their children rather than being forced to make tough choices between paying the heating bill, the rent, or the doctor's bill.

Federal tax policies are especially helpful in rural Oregon, since more families are struggling financially in rural areas than in urban areas of the state. Poverty rates for Oregon's rural communities are higher, at 13.8 percent, than for urban communities, at 11.4 percent.<sup>64</sup> And many more families in rural Oregon are not poor but still have a hard time making ends meet.

## **Child Poverty and Future Crime are Linked**

The association between poverty and higher crime rates for juveniles is a strong and consistent finding across numerous studies conducted within the United States and in other industrialized countries. For example, in one major study, "Over 23 percent of boys from poverty compared with 8.8 percent of boys not from poverty were convicted of violent offenses."<sup>65</sup>

The Surgeon General's report on youth

violence reviewed the literature on risk factors for violence and reached a similar conclusion. The report found that “low family socioeconomic status/poverty” when a child is between 6 and 11 years old, ranked higher than coming from a single-parent home or having either antisocial or abusive parents when it comes to predicting a child’s involvement in violent crime between the ages of 15 and 18.<sup>66</sup>

Changes in family income are also important. The research on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and its impact on child well-being has shown that when mothers of pre-school and elementary school-aged children go to work and also receive earning supplements so that they are not only working but actually bringing home more income for their families, their children’s academic performance and/or behavior improves. For example, the Minnesota Family Investment Program that increased family income cut in half the proportion of children with high levels of behavioral and emotional problems. Those positive outcomes should translate into lower criminality when the children mature. Unfortunately, worsening poverty creates the opposite effects. In all four programs studied where the transition to work led to lower family incomes, the children were more likely to be in special classes for behavioral or emotional problems.<sup>67</sup>

### **Rural Families’ Hard Times Can Harm Children**

Research shows that the stresses of economic hardship take a toll on parenting, negatively affecting children. A group of studies examined how rural families reacted to the 1980s farm crisis in rural America, and the resulting loss of farms and jobs.<sup>68</sup> According to the research, the stress of economic hardship from decreased income and unstable work leads parents to be more harsh and punitive with their children. Some parents’ greater hostility toward their children led to increased adolescent emotional

and behavioral problems, including aggression.<sup>69</sup>

Helping families who are struggling financially can reduce parents’ economic stress, and ultimately help prevent kids from developing these emotional and behavior problems. Since adolescent behavior problems such as aggression can turn into violent criminal offenses, providing economic support through federal tax credits is another way to help young people succeed and avoid lives of crime.

### **Federal Tax Policies**

The following federal tax programs offer critical help to working families.

#### *Earned Income Tax Credit*

The federal government offers the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC or EIC), which provides tax reductions and wage supplements for low- and moderate-income working families. This is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the country. In 2002, the federal EITC lifted approximately 4.9 million individuals out of poverty.<sup>70</sup> For tax year 2005, the credit is capped at \$4,400 for a family with two children, and at \$2,662 for a family with one child.<sup>71</sup>

The EITC can be an important tax credit for rural families, as families in rural areas nationally are among the most likely to earn the EITC, with 18.2 percent of rural tax filers earning the credit.<sup>72</sup> In Oregon, rural families earn the EITC at an even higher rate than do urban families. Nearly 16 percent of rural Oregonians earn the credit, as compared to 11.8 percent of Oregonians in urban areas.<sup>73</sup>

In 2003, over 225,000 Oregon households filed for the EITC and earned back more than \$360 million.<sup>74</sup> In addition to the federal EITC, Oregon created a smaller state EITC fund to further assist middle- and low-income families.<sup>75</sup>

### *Child Tax Credit*

In addition to the EITC, the Federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) is also available to low- to middle-income Americans. The CTC reaches a larger group of Americans, as the income threshold for filing is considerably higher than for the EITC. To be eligible, families' taxable earned income must be above \$10,750. In 2003, 285,000 Oregon households earned the CTC with a total return of almost \$258 million to Oregon families.<sup>76</sup>

### *Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit*

For working families, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit enables families to deduct portions of their child care expenses. The tax credit is available to families with dependents (children or elders) needing work-related care. Families may use the credit for children under age 13. The credit amount is based on adjusted gross income and on the amount of work-related child and dependent care expenses paid to a care provider.<sup>77</sup> The credit can range from 20 to 35 percent of qualifying expenses, depending upon income, with maximum annual benefits per family ranging from \$1,050 to \$2,100 per year. In 2003, over 66,000 Oregon families received the child care credit for a total of \$29,456,000.<sup>78</sup>

In sum, these tax policies returned almost \$648 million to Oregon working families, helping them to make ends meet and better provide for their children.<sup>79</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The research evidence is clear: child and teen programs, such as high-quality pre-kindergarten, in-home parent coaching, after-school activities and juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs reduce crime and drug abuse. As in many other states throughout the country, however, Oregon's rural children and families remain underserved due to inadequate funding. By failing to allocate sufficient funds, Congress denies thousands of rural kids access to these effective

approaches. This compromises the future of Oregon's young children and threatens the public's safety.

Law enforcement in Oregon is already stretched thin as it struggles to protect local communities. As rural Oregon faces drug abuse, poverty, and other challenges, now is the time to fully meet the need for investments in programs that get kids on the right track, rather than cutting this federal funding.

If the Administration's proposed budget cuts this year and in following years are approved, thousands of at-risk rural children would be sentenced to a lifetime of lost opportunity. Families throughout Oregon would be placed at greater risk from crime and would be unnecessarily subjected to the agony that crime leaves in its wake. If we don't set wise priorities now and pay for smart investments that steer children away from crime, we will pay dearly later in crime costs and in victims' lives.

## APPENDIX

### Oregon Economic and Social Indicators

Indicator	Rural	Urban
Civilian unemployment rate (2003, percent)	9.3	7.9
Employment growth (2002 to 2003, percent)	0.9	0.2
Percent of 2002 employment in farm and farm-related jobs	22.0	15.2
Median household income (2003, dollars)	34,067	43,842
Per capita income (2003, dollars)	23,533	30,287
Poverty rate (2002, percent)	13.6	10.6
Child poverty rate* (2003, percent)	21.3	16.3

\*Includes children under age 18. U.S. Census Bureau.

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### Funding for Major Federal Children and Youth Programs in Oregon, 2004

Program	State	Federal	Total combined
Head Start	\$26,100,000	\$58,892,507	\$84,922,507
Child Care	\$13,773,143	-	\$13,773,143
TANF	\$40,041,784	\$169,034,897	\$209,076,681
CCDBG	-	\$59,336,139	\$59,336,139
SSBG	-	\$20,644,226	\$20,644,226
21st Century Community Learning Centers	-	\$1,567,660	\$1,567,660
CAPTA	-	\$270,161	\$270,161
PSSF	-	\$5,228,952	\$5,228,952
JABG	-	\$659,100	\$659,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$53,814,927</b>	<b>\$315,633,642</b>	<b>\$395,548,569</b>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 U.S. Department of Justice

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David Olds, the principal author, updated some of those findings using alternative statistical analysis. Those results are presented on his web site under research findings and are discussed in an interview: <http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home>

<sup>59</sup> Carol Wire, Deputy Director, Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Salem, Oregon, personal communication 4/12/06.

<sup>60</sup> Nationwide cuts are based on the difference between the predicted yearly inflation-adjusted funding levels for a program's subfunction from FY07 through FY11 (from Table 25-12 of the Analytical Perspectives section of the President's FY07 Budget) and predicted funding levels based on the year-to-year changes between FY07 and FY11 in overall discretionary spending levels for each subfunction (from a 1/23/06 OMB computer run on President's FY07 proposed budget.) FY06 final program appropriations are used for comparison. To determine the projected level of cuts each state would face, this analysis assumed that the cuts would be proportionate to each state's 2004 funding level.

<sup>61</sup> United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2005).

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<sup>62</sup> For Functional Family Therapy, see: Alexander, J., Pugh, C., Parsons, B., & Sexton, T. (2000). Family Functional Therapy. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), **Blueprints for violence prevention: Book three.** Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. For Multisystemic Therapy, see: Henggeler, S. W., Mihalic, S. F., Rone, L., Thomas, C., & Timmons-Mitchell, J. (1998). Multisystemic Therapy. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), **Blueprints for violence prevention: Book six.** Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. For Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care see: Chamberlain, P., & Mihalic, S. F. (1998). Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care. In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), **Blueprints for violence prevention: Book eight.** Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

<sup>63</sup> Aos, S., Phipps, P., Barnoski, R., & Lieb, R. (2001). **The comparative costs and benefits of programs to reduce crime.** Retrieved from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy Web site: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=01-05-1201>

<sup>64</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. (2005). **State Fact Sheets: Oregon.** Retrieved April, 2006 from Economic Research Service Website: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/OR.htm>

<sup>65</sup> Hawkins, J.D., Herrenkohl, T., Farrington, D.P., Brewer, D., Catalano, R.F., & Harachi, T.W. (1998). A review of predictors of youth violence, in eds. Loeber, R., Farrington, D.P., Serious & violent juvenile offenders: Risk factors and successful interventions, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

<sup>66</sup> Office of the Surgeon General. (2001). **Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General.** Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<sup>67</sup> Morris, P.A., Gennetian, L.A., & Duncan, G.J. (2005). Effects of welfare and employment policies on young children: New findings on policy experiments conducted in the early 1990s. **Social Policy Report**, XIX, 3-17; Sherman, A. (2001, Fall). How children fare in welfare experiments: The pivotal role of income. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, DC.

<sup>68</sup> Conger, R. D., & Elder, Jr., G. H. (1994). **Families in Troubled Times: Adapting to Change in Rural America.** New York, NY: Aldine De Gruyter.

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<sup>70</sup> Johnson, N., Llobrera, J., & Zahradnik, B. (2004). **A Hand up: How state earned income tax credits help working families escape poverty in 2004.** Retrieved November 2004 from Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Web site: <http://www.cbpp.org/3-3-03sfp.htm>

<sup>71</sup> The Internal Revenue Service. (2005). **EITC Thresholds and Tax Law Updates – Current Year 2005.** Retrieved March 22, 2006 from IRS website:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=150513,00.html>

<sup>72</sup> Only families in large cities have higher rates of earning the credit, with 20.4 percent of filers receiving it. Berube, A. & Thacher, T. (2004). **The "State" of Low-Wage Workers: How the EITC Benefits Urban and Rural Communities in 50 States.** Brookings Institution Publications. Retrieved April 4, 2006 from the Brookings Website: [http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/eitc/20040203\\_berube.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/eitc/20040203_berube.htm)

<sup>73</sup> Berube, A. & Thacher, T. (2004). **The "State" of Low-Wage Workers: How the EITC Benefits Urban and Rural Communities in 50 States.** Brookings Institution Publications. Retrieved April 4, 2006 from the Brookings Website: [http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/eitc/20040203\\_berube.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/eitc/20040203_berube.htm)

<sup>74</sup> The Internal Revenue Service. (2006). **Individual income and tax data, by state and size of adjusted gross income.** Tax Year 2003. Oregon. Retrieved April, 2006 from IRS website:

<http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/indtaxstats/article/0,,id=103106,00.html>

<sup>75</sup> Leachman, M. (February 25, 2005). **Investing in Working Families: Improving Oregon's Earned Income Credit.** Oregon Center for Public Policy. Retrieved on April 7, 2006 at: <http://www.ocpp.org/cgi-bin/display.cgi?page=es050225>

<sup>76</sup> The Internal Revenue Service. (2006). **Individual income and tax data, by state and size of adjusted gross income.** Tax Year 2003. Oregon. Retrieved November 24, 2004 from IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=103106,00.html>

<sup>77</sup> The Internal Revenue Service. (2006). **Claiming the Child and Dependent Care Credit. IRS Tax Tip 2006-46.** Retrieved March 22, 2006 from IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=106189,00.html>

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