

Thank you, Chair McDermott and honorable members of the King County Council, for the opportunity to provide this statement in support of renewing the Best Start for Kids levy.

My name is Jessica Galvez, and I am the Washington State Manager for Save the Children Action Network (SCAN). Which is the political advocacy arm for Save the Children's, we are building bipartisan support to ensure every child has a healthy start in life.

In King County, we have over 3,000 online supporters, an active Community Action Team with adult volunteers, and Student Ambassador programs at the University of Washington, Redmond High School, and Annie Wright boys and girls schools in Tacoma.

In 2015, SCAN contributed to the Best Start for Kids levy campaign. If given the opportunity again this year, we are excited to help renew what is now considered the most comprehensive child development approach in the nation.

While maintaining the current levy's allocation levels, proposed ordinance 62 would also advance a bold new approach for child care in the County.

Children lack access to child care for many reasons, with cost and availability being the primary contributing factors. The pandemic has only exacerbated the problem, as many providers have permanently closed their doors due to low enrolment – in part due to parents having lost their ability to pay tuition – paired with provider costs almost doubling.

These additional widespread closures have perpetuated our society's vast inequities further, disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Your support of Proposition 62 will go a long way towards improving children's lives and those who provide essential early learning opportunities. It would establish a new subsidy program to reduce or fully subsidize child care costs for families with low-incomes, economically harmed by the pandemic and would launch a demonstration project to gauge how a living wage would improve recruitment and retention of early care and education professionals.

Thank you for your time today.

Jessica Galvez
Manager, Washington State
Save the Children Action Network