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Contacts:

Leslie Bienen, Opening PDX Schools, [REDACTED]

Jennifer Dale, Clack to School, [REDACTED]

ED300: www.ed300.org

OREGON FAMILIES, YOUTH CAUGHT OFF-GUARD BY SHUTDOWN OF INDOOR, OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Oregon's family groups are frustrated and dismayed by Governor Kate Brown's apparent about-face Wednesday as revised shutdown orders were released that shuttered all indoor sports for K-12 youth.

The last minute change sent parents scrambling for answers and solutions. Just last week, the governor said that youth programs and k-12 sports that are currently allowed would remain **open**. Now, under guidance released from OHA just today, many of those programs are **closed**. At the same time, many school districts continue to keep school grounds closed, including [Portland Public Schools](#).

"The combination of the governor's closure of indoor facilities and school district continued field closures severely limits families' options for exercise and safe social interaction as we face the darkest, rainiest, and coldest part of the year." said Rene Gonzalez, spokesman for ED300 and Opening PDX Schools. "We are leaving children with almost no safe outlets; this is dangerous for our older children and damaging for all children at a time when they are otherwise deprived of most in-person, school-related contact and activities."

"Many of our kids rely on these activities as their only outlet for physical exertion and release of stress," said parent of three Jennifer Dale. "Many parents, including essential workers, rely on sports and youth activities as a source of care for their children while attending to work."

"These activities have been taking place in our state using all safety and hygiene protocols and under the strict supervision of coaches and school personnel for several months. They have been taking place on a full-contact basis nearly nation-wide for even longer. Data has shown that very little viral transmission occurs during game play of any kind in any of these venues (the NFL identified ZERO transmissions this entire season due to game play)." Rick Dyer, Spokesman for Let Them Play.

Indoor sports facilities have worked throughout the summer to adopt safety measures that include distancing and mask requirements. They reduced cohort sizes, improved ventilation systems, and put into place strong protocols to keep patrons safe and healthy. These businesses are not the source of outbreaks. As already acknowledged by the Governor, large unmasked social gatherings are contributing to the spread, as are outbreaks at nursing facilities and correctional facilities. Yet, in conjunction with the school closures, these draconian restrictions are affecting our youth more than any other population, all while the risk of serious illness to them is extremely small.

ED 300 calls on Governor Brown to reconsider closing safe indoor youth activities, Schools Districts statewide to keep their outdoor facilities open and for elected officials to fully consider unintended impacts on children of school closures and lockdowns.

"We've got to do better. We owe it to our children to do better. Their total health – mental and physical – needs to be prioritized. These measures may force kids into unsafe and uncontrolled environments because all the structured and controlled ones are closed," said Dale.

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