

### Passed Unanimously out of House Judiciary Committee

## Reuniting Families and Preventing Children from Aging out of Foster Care

## What does HB 4009A do?

Youth,

**Rights** &

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- HB 4009A creates a court process for a child or DHS to reunify a child with a parent whose rights have been terminated when the parent has made significant positive changes in their life and the juvenile court finds that it is in the child's best interest.
- HB 4009A has many safeguards to protect children and does not allow anyone to disrupt an existing, filed, or otherwise pending adoption.
- This bill will help reunify families of children who would otherwise age out of the foster care system without a legal parent.

# Why is HB 4009A Necessary?

- Currently, the juvenile court may not return a child to her parent after that parent's rights have been terminated—even if the child has not been adopted and the parent has made significant positive changes that make them a safe parent.
- More than 1,700 children in Oregon are waiting to be adopted.
- 16 other states, including Washington, Colorado, and California, have similar laws.
- The Oregon Court of Appeals has suggested that a legislative fix is necessary to allow families to reunite when it is in a child's best interests.<sup>1</sup>
- Children of color and those with disabilities are more likely to age out of foster care without a permanent family.<sup>2</sup>

#### Sponsored by Rep. Sanchez Supported by the following partners Coalition of Children First Communities of STA Family Cont for Oregon Color eliminating racism empowering women dest branch west the Mississippi. of greater portland AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION Dept. of Human Services v. K.W., 273 Or App 611 (2015). Oregon <sup>2</sup> Post & Zimmerman, The Revolving Doors of Family Court: Confronting Broken Adoptions, 2012.

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