

Representative Keny-Guyer, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
900 Court St. NE, HR 50  
Salem, OR 97301

February 5, 2019

Re: The Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission seeks your support in passing HB 2332.

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2332, which amends the statute establishing the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission ("the Commission") created by the 2016 Oregon Legislature in HB 4080. We urge your support for HB 2332 with the proposed amendments that are attached to this letter.

As noted, in 2016, HB 4080 created the Commission consisting of 11 members and tasked it with the responsibilities to, among other things, advise the Governor and Director of the Department of Human Services and make recommendations for legislation regarding the foster care system in this state. In addition, the Commission is tasked with monitoring accountability in the foster care system by measuring a comprehensive list of outcomes that includes, but is not limited to, promotion of responsible statewide advocacy for children in foster care, decreasing demographic disproportionality of children in foster care, and decreasing the number of placements in substitute care.

Despite the Commission's broad duties, HB 4080 did not appropriate any funding for the Commission to do its work in compiling relevant information or a dedicated staff person. This lack of funding has made it difficult for the Commission to fulfill its full mandate of monitoring and ensuring accountability in the foster care system. Further, the lack of funding has also hindered the Commission's ability to make those who have lived experiences in the foster care system—foster care children and youth, parents and families, and foster parents—a part of the work and solution to the problems and issues identified in various reports regarding Oregon's foster care system.

At this time, the Commission is seeking funding for a dedicated staff person to assist the Commission with fulfilling its obligations as outlined in HB 4080, enacted as ORS 418.041. This staff person will, among other things, help the Commission with compiling the data necessary to measure a wide range of outcomes in the foster care system, research legal issues and policies, and evaluate and track various initiatives and legislations affecting the foster care system. In addition, the Commission seeks funding to reimburse current and former foster care

youth and children, their families, and foster care parents for their travel and time to participate in the work of the Commission.

With the proposed amendments to HB 2332, the Commission intends to help facilitate dialogue and collaboration in addressing the issues in our foster care system as well as ensure that decisions and solutions to improve the foster care system are informed by those who have lived experiences.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Valerie Colas      /s/ Elliott Hinkle

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