

TO: Joint Ways & Means, Subcommittee on Human Services  
RE: House Bill 5026  
ON: February 26, 2019

Chairs Nosse and Beyer, members of the committee,

I'm a mother, friend, colleague, daughter, wife, and most of all I'm Chandra Bettis, a caseworker with over ten years serving vulnerable children and families for the State of Oregon Department of Human Services.

As a caseworker, I work with children and families that have experienced abuse and neglect. Last week, I laid on the floor with another caseworker who broke down crying. As we laid on the office floor, a *gross floor that you would never walk around barefoot on*, she expressed how inadequate she is. She has over twenty families on her caseload, twice as many as the workload model recommends. She talked about spending most of her time navigating the system to get services for one child. This child has had twenty plus foster care placements including staying in a hotel as our system was not able to meet his needs. This caseworker cried and cried as she expressed, she had paperwork that she couldn't get done, children to visit unknowing if they are safe, and a court hearing she figured she was going to get reprimanded for. She is working overtime without claiming it. She is a single mother who is not spending time with her own two-year child because she is working until 9pm at night. She sat there crying, exhausted and defeated because she was unable to provide or assist her families in becoming self-sufficient and independent. I don't know if this passionate caseworker is going to make it but I hope so. I hope today you hear our stories and implement a plan of action that supports caseworkers and that is aligned with State of Oregon's mission statement "*To help Oregonians in their own communities achieve wellbeing and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.*"

We need you, our families need you, yesterday, today and in the future by providing:

- 100% funding, so we have the resources for our families
- case load caps so we can engage all families
- fair wages and benefits for all workers

Thank you.