



March 20, 2019

The Honorable Sara Gelser  
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee  
State Capital  
Salem, Oregon

Concerning: Support of SB 1 and SB 221 as Children and Youth with Specialized Needs Investments

Dear Senator Gelser and members of the committee

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1 and SB 221. I have owned and managed several Oregon based businesses over the past 35 years, Oregon Title Insurance Company and Footwear Specialties International. As a successful businessman I have recognized my responsibility to support the solving of major community issues we face, both by active participation (board service) and financial support. One area of my focus has been with institutions supporting children and families with complex needs such as Christie Care and its successor Youth Villages. I served on the Board and as Board Chair in the 80's and 90's for Christie and since 2011 have been an officer and Board member of its successor, Youth Villages'.

The severity of the issues some of our youth face today require services and treatment that generate costs that private fundraising is unable to adequately cover. Multiple care givers located throughout the state also require oversight/accountability that need to be addressed at the state level as the children and youth move through the system. There is a lack of cross-system collaboration, flexibility and responsiveness to keep children in a family setting and in a neighborhood school. It is obvious that a number of the clients are misplaced, in some instances causing overspending of precious state dollars on unneeded services, or being in a setting not conducive to helping an individual with complex needs.

The two bills up for consideration will go a long way in addressing these issues by investing in critically needed services to help families stay together safely and successfully whenever



possible, creating high quality placements for youth who need a brief out of home placement along with enhanced crisis support programs.

To insure that that the goals and objectives set forth in these two bills are achieved, it creates a permanent leadership group appointed by the governor to provide oversight/accountability, incentivize change and address shortcomings in the system.

Thank you for your efforts championing the needs of our children and youth with specialized needs. We ask that you support SB 1 and SB 221, the passage of which will be a meaningful step towards supporting our at-risk kids across Oregon.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'H. Pat Ritz'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' at the end.

H. Pat Ritz

Chairman and CEO, Footwear Specialties International