

My name is Debby Lute and I am the executive director for Connections365, a non-profit organization that has been serving Oregon's at-risk youth and families for the past 30 years. We provide therapeutic foster care, residential and mental health treatment services, and mentoring support. This email is to request your support for House Bill 3208. Passing this bill will have a positive impact in Oregon's children, youth and families in many ways including:

- 1) Creating solutions for both current workforce and system of care issues within the provider system in Oregon. A few examples of current concerns are:
 - a. A need for a funding mechanism that provides comprehensive cost of care funding for child welfare services, based on provider's true and accurate costs for treatment-level services.
 - b. 80 children placed out of state due to lack of appropriate capacity and levels of care that meet their needs
 - c. Staff recruitment and retention - High staff turnover rates (35% for my organization) in the past year due to inability to pay appropriate competitive wages for degreed staff
 - d. Inability to fill positions – we have had four openings (out of 12 positions total) in our residential treatment program for the past 90 days and have been able to fill one of those positions during that time period
- 2) Improvements in the investigative process for abuse and neglect allocations for high needs and complex youth receiving treatment services
 - a. Trained investigative workforce that includes trauma informed care, standards of care, child development, and evidence-based practices
 - b. Outside review of the investigative process system in general
 - c. Requiring an in-house trauma and childhood development expert for investigative teams

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your support for HB 3208. If you have any questions, please feel free to email or call me.

