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March 13, 2019

Chair Keny Guyer  
Vice Chair Noble  
Members of the House Committee on Housing and Human Services

RE: HB 3178

On behalf of the over 3,000 Central Oregon children and families we served last year, I urge you to support and advocate for HB 3178. Kids Intervention and Diagnostic Service (KIDS) Center, a child abuse intervention center serving Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Harney, Sherman, Wheeler counties as well as the Warm Springs community, is dedicated to the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse serving children birth to 18 years of age. This bill will provide *critical funding necessary* to immediately and comprehensively respond to vulnerable children impacted by the unthinkable, abuse by someone they know and who is entrusted in their care.

Child abuse creates a living nightmare for these young victims--a nightmare from which it is difficult to escape. The impact of abuse on the child is traumatic, especially for low-income children who may not have their basic needs met and lack access to services, and especially when it occurs at such a crucial stage of a child's development. Extensive research studies document that children experiencing "Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)" such as abuse, who do not receive appropriate support, have significantly increased risks of further abuse, an inability to succeed in school, higher teen pregnancy rates, and long-term health issues including obesity, diabetes, and substance abuse.

Many children referred to KIDS Center are also referred for exposure to drugs, or have witnessed domestic violence between their parents, which is a leading factor in repeat victimization and for continuing the cycle of violence to the next generation.

Ultimately, passing HB 3178 will make a huge difference in the lives of children in our community. Importantly, state investment will move us closer to an Oregon where all children regardless of their ability to pay or where they live, will be able to access the medical exams and forensic interviews that document abuse by professionals in the child abuse field, immediate family support and vital connections to community resources to lower the stress often caused by the abuse, and immediate and long-term evidence-based therapy for the entire family.

With CAIC intervention, we hope to reduce unnecessary trauma experienced by children and to provide opportunities for children to heal from their abuse. We know we are making a huge difference and urge your support of HB 3178 to even further increase our impact. We hope for your support in our vision that every child in Oregon has the opportunity for expert, child-focused care when there are concerns of abuse.

Sincerely,

Shelly Smith  
Executive Director  
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