



Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Nosse and members of the committee,

For the record, I am Jaime Rodriguez and I have the honor of serving as President of AFT-Oregon.

On behalf of the over 16,000 workers that AFT-Oregon represents in our state's universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools, I thank you for the opportunity to share AFT-Oregon's support for continued funding of the KEEP Program and Treatment Foster Care Oregon. AFT-Oregon is a proud member of the Foster Homes of Healing coalition because we know how vital this funding is to serving kids and families in Oregon.

The primary purpose of Foster Homes of Healing is to elevate the quality of Foster Care in Oregon. In 2019 the Oregon State Legislature made strategic investments to improve the foster care system and better support children and youth in foster care. Our Coalition urges the legislature to continue this support. **In particular, we encourage the committee to maintain funding for the KEEP program and Treatment Foster Care Oregon. We also ask that the Committee consider making a much-needed investment to add additional child welfare caseworkers to support youth and families.**

Equity is an explicitly stated value and priority of AFT-Oregon, and we believe very strongly that these programs, particularly the KEEP program through the affinity groups, are important investments to help serve some of Oregon's most underserved families.

In the past several years Oregon has made great strides toward improving our foster care system for youth and families. We hope that this committee will choose to maintain the evidence-based investments made in 2019 and consider additional support for the Oregon Department of Human Services by funding additional caseworkers.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jaime Rodriguez'.

Jaime Rodriguez
President
AFT-Oregon