



Taking action for basic human needs.



To: Human Services Committee
From: Human Services Coalition of Oregon
Date: February 17, 2021
Re: HB 5024, Public Health Modernization

Chair Williams and members of the committee,

The Human Services Coalition of Oregon supports HB 2505, to establish a Child Welfare Equity Committee as a critical part of the Governor's Foster Care Advisory Commission.

For over three decades, HSCO has convened like-minded advocates in an effort to fight for the policy development and resources necessary to support vulnerable Oregonians. HSCO is made up of over 100 individuals and organizations that work together to develop effective tax, education, health care, housing, human services and economic development policy that together make Oregon a better place for all its citizens.

HB 2505 will create a committee within the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission to review the processes used when making case decisions and recommend actions for revisions to remove bias and will focus on prevention of removal and equitable treatment of families involved with child welfare. A key role of the committee will be to advise the Commission on culturally appropriate child welfare services, including best practices for keeping families intact, ongoing child welfare support services and the equitable provision of child welfare services across populations being served

It is clear, both historically and in recent data, that there is implicit and explicit bias built into the foster care system. Historically marginalized communities are deeply impacted by racism, ableism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, and other systems of oppression. These inequities lead to injustices such as overrepresentation of these communities in the foster care system and underservice of family affirming resources.

One of the best ways to support youth in the foster care system is to listen to their experiences and involve them in the process of improving the system. This bill was proposed and developed by current and former foster youth at the Oregon Foster Youth Connection (OFYC) Policy Conference in 2020. It is a direct result of their experience and their informed suggestion for making meaningful change to the system.

HSCO support's HB 2505 to remove bias from child welfare decisions so that individuals and families impacted by child welfare decisions can have fair and equitable treatment and access to services.

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