



## Service Employees International Union Local 503

*72,000 public services workers, care providers, and non-profit employees in Oregon.*

**To: House Committee on Human Services**  
**On: February 17, 2021**  
**Re: House Bill 2505, Support**

Dear Chair Williams, Vice-Chairs Leif and Ruiz, members of the committee,

My name is Courtney Graham and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of SEIU Local 503 in support of House Bill 2505. SEIU represents more than 72,000 people statewide, including over 22,000 public sector workers. This includes many of the hardworking people at the Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare.

Historically marginalized communities are significantly overrepresented in Oregon's foster care system, both in terms of the number of reports made to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) and the number of children and families who are in care. This is an issue of significant concern to our members not only because some of them come from these communities and can see the harm that is done, but also because they work with these children and families every day as they enter the foster care system. HB 2505 will work against such inequities to create a more just and equitable child welfare system.

HB 2505 will set up a committee within the existing Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission to review the processes used when making case decisions and recommend actions for revisions to remove bias. The new Child Welfare Equity Committee will focus on prevention of removal and equitable treatment of families involved with child welfare. In addition, HB 2505 will expand membership for the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission from 11 to 13 and will provide a Policy Analyst to support both the Commission and the Child Welfare Equity Committee.

We are asking you to support HB 2505 to strengthen the existing Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission so that it can recommend actions to remove bias from child welfare decisions. Individuals and families impacted by child welfare decisions deserve fair and equitable treatment and access to services. The need for this work is long overdue, and we look forward to the opportunity for SEIU 503 members in Child Welfare to partner with the Governor's Child Foster Care Advisory Commission.

Thank you for your consideration,

Courtney Graham  
Political Strategist  
SEIU Local 503, OPEU