



Parrott Creek

Serving Children and Families

Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services in regards to HB 2340

February 26, 2021

Chair Williams, Co-Chairs Lief and Ruiz, distinguished members of the committee. I am writing today in support of HB 2340 and its intended investment of \$8.2M to expand Independent Living Programs for children and youth in our child welfare system of care.

While there is much to be proud of in Oregon, there is one area where we continue to fail and that is with our population of vulnerable youth – and by extension their families and their communities. Oregon fails year after year to adequately invest in appropriate community services and supports. We should all be ashamed that Oregon ranks 36th for teen suicide rates, 39th for K-12 education achievement AND 47th for child & youth access to mental health treatment and support.

The youth that end up in Oregon Department of Human Services care are the direct result of these failures in service investment.

While it won't fill the entire gap in services, HB 2340 goes a long way to help meet the needs of youth who have faced significant trauma in their childhood and now need extra support as they transition in to young adulthood. This allocation will help prevent homelessness, victimization, food insecurity and other adverse outcomes for foster youth by stabilizing ILP providers like Parrott Creek so we can continue and expand our services to more youth in foster care.

Parrott Creek Child & Family Services expanded its programs during the COVID-19 pandemic to respond to increases in acute needs of foster youth. We now offer:

- Case Management, Transitional Housing and Independent Living support to homeless youth and youth aging out of foster care facing housing insecurity;
- Residential and Outpatient Treatment for highly traumatized youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice system;
- Transition support into stable housing
- Clean-and-sober housing for mothers under the age of 25 reunifying with their children (predominantly infants and toddlers) have been in the care and custody of ODHS.

Children in foster care are our children and it's our responsibility to help them learn the skills needed to succeed as adults. HB 2340's investment is an important step to help make that a reality. Thank you for your continued work in helping Oregon's youth in foster care live productive lives.

Simon Fulford
Executive Director