



The Lighthouse for Kids

Clatsop County Child Abuse Assessment Center

1230 Marine Dr. Suite 301; Astoria OR 97103

Ph: 503-325-4977

lighthouse@thelighthouse4kids.org

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The Lighthouse for Kids is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Tax ID 93-1258590

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallen, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Marvin Bermudez. I serve as the Executive Director of The Lighthouse for Kids. In our 24 -year history, we have cared for over 2000 children primarily from Clatsop County. Many of these children are survivors of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. At The Lighthouse for Kids, we identify when child abuse has happened, and intervene to keep children safe and start them on the path toward healing.

I am requesting your support of HB 2732 to maintain the increased investment of \$6M in Children’s Advocacy Centers made during the 2021 legislative session. Children’s Advocacy Centers have been working with the Legislature to increase state funding, and we are thankful that our \$6M funding request was included in the Christmas Tree bill last session. As you know, the Christmas Tree bill was created as a one-time funding allocation, and CACs continually report that their greatest need is highly specialized staff. In fact, nearly every CAC reported using the 2021 funding for increased staff, or increased hours for existing staff.

For example, one Center used the funding to hire a bilingual therapist- a longstanding need for that community. Additional uses included purchases of new medical equipment and facility repairs or expansions so that more kids could be seen. The Lighthouse used the funds to upgrade our recording equipment and to add an additional day of service.

CACs serve all children regardless of their family’s ability to pay, but the current level of state support means many children endure long waitlists for services. Worse, children might not be seen by a CAC at all. Instead, they may be interviewed in police stations or emergency rooms by staff with no specialized training to assess children for child abuse, and without the team of multidisciplinary experts working together— which is a cornerstone of the CAC approach.

Passing HB 2732 will move us closer to an Oregon where all children have access to a team of experts who are dedicated to supporting them, stopping abuse and beginning the process of healing. Please hold the progress you made to protect kids and continue the \$6M investment in CACs.

Sincerely,

Marvin Bermudez
The Lighthouse for Kids

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Winston Churchill