

Submitter: Cindy Cosenzo

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB548

I support SB 548 because, believe it or not, children and youth in foster care in Oregon are given trash bags to carry their belongings when they are displaced from home. Since 2018, Project Never Again a local non-profit in North Plains has been trying to change that. Each year, the organization invites the community to donate duffel bags for the youth. Last year, the community together with the generous support of Adidas, donated 12,000 duffels. Project Never Again's next goal is to create a protocol to get those duffel bags consistently into the kids' hands. Oregon Senate Bill 548 will do just that. Project Never Again has tried many times over the last two years to encourage and help Oregon Department of Human Services staff develop a pipeline for ensuring the donated bags get to the children but this has not happened. It has fallen to individual (already overburdened) case workers to determine if and when they have the interest and capacity to do so, rather than an efficient and streamlined protocol being established for all foster care case workers. After many efforts, Project Never Again is now turning to a legislative approach to help put this protocol in place, so it is both easy and efficient for the staff, as well as consistent and offered for all foster children. No child should be given a trash bag to carry their belongings. Ever. Not the least of which when their lives are already being turned upside down being displaced from home.

Please pass SB 548.

Thank you

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