

Submitter: John Gear  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure: SB548

Senators,

Children entering foster care in Oregon used to routinely face a moment when, just as their world was crumbling and they were entering an alien and foreign foster care system, they were then told to put all their clothes in a garbage bag as they were taken into the system. That was their welcome to their new life in foster care — a degrading humiliation that should never happen to anyone, much less children.

Seema Steffany, a former foster child herself, founded Project Never Again to stop this needless humiliation of children that sends them such a destructive message about their worth.

Over the last few years, Project Never Again has heroically worked to fill a gap that the state of Oregon should be filling. Seema and friend have worked and raised funds and wrangled donations tirelessly so they could provide Oregon child welfare authorities with thousands of sturdy duffels with nametags and a message of hope.

It's time for all Oregonians to step up and do what Project Never Again has been doing: ensure that Oregon uses a proper duffel bag when collecting kids into the foster care system.

Of course, as elected officials, even though the cost of this simple change will be minuscule, you know that any bill that has a fiscal note is tough to pass. That's why this bill needs to pass out of committee with a unanimous do-pass vote, and you need to go back to your caucuses and say this is one bill we can all agree on.

Thank you for acting. We can't fix all the problems kids face, but we can fix this one.

Cordially,  
John Gear  
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