



Testimony in support of HB2454 and HB2456

According to studies at Chapin Hall - Across any 12-month period of time nearly 4.2 million young people between the ages of 13 and 25 are experiencing some form of homelessness. Oregon often leads the nation in numbers of youth experiencing housing instability but is falling behind other communities in terms of resources to support them. Youth experiencing homelessness served at Safe Place in Washington County, Oregon are in desperate need of shelter, basic needs assistance, and guidance to build strong - healthy relationships.

Without these crisis and stabilization services, youth remaining homeless are at risk of a multitude of traumatizing experiences including human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and becoming victims of physical and mental violence that could lead to a lifetime of continued trauma.

Youth served through programs like Safe Place provided by Boys & Girls Aid need intensive support to exit homelessness and become self-sufficient through education, resiliency building, employment services, and opportunities for stable living. Without this, youth are at great risk of entering the adult homeless system and chronic housing instability.

The Return on Investment

Every dollar invested in early intervention may result in nearly \$7 in cost savings by preventing and resolving problems before they become chronic. \$500,000 spent on Safe Place can save \$3.5 million annually by:

- Reducing the cost of intake through juvenile detention.
- Reducing street crime and unnecessary incarceration.
- Promoting completion of GED and high school participation.
- Creating independent, functioning youth who can contribute to society and break cycles of homelessness.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that chronically homeless adults represent 20% of the homeless population, while consuming 80% of the resources at an estimate cost of \$42,000 per person, per year.

If these youth are left without resources, they are at risk of entering the adult homeless system and becoming chronically homeless. We cannot adequately address adult homelessness without equally supporting and addressing youth homelessness.