

Submitter: Sarah Wickersham

On Behalf Of: Douglas CARES

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety

Measure: SB5514

Douglas CARES is a small non-profit child advocacy center in Douglas County, Oregon. We have 14 employees and serve around 650 children a year with a mix of Forensic Interviews (350), Forensic Medical Exams (almost 200), hair follicle drug screening, CANS assessments, dental screenings, foster care well-child exams, mental health assessments, trauma therapy, skills training and case management. Being in a small community, there are limited resources for the full array of services that children need when they have experienced abuse and neglect. Our agency has stepped in to provide many services that CACs don't often provide to best support the children and families we care for. The last round of funding that was approved allowed us to pay our rent and utilities for a year, allowed the purchase of a vehicle so that we could offer transportation services to our clients and helped to provide wage increases for our incredibly valuable employees. We care for the most vulnerable of children, provide light in the darkness for families, and are the hub for our community response when the unthinkable happens. Our employees offer their best when they are serving the clients who need us, rather than holding fund raisers, writing ask letters or holding bake sales to fund our operations. Please support POP #309 and continue funding these most critical services for children and their families.

Thank you,

Sarah, Amanda, Becky, Nikole, Cheryl, Rhonda, Jake, Tami, Sophie, David, Kelsey, Markelle, Eileen, and Erin