



Children's
Advocacy
C E N T E R
OF JACKSON COUNTY

March 1, 2023

Co-Chairs Sen. Sollman and Rep Evans and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety,

Hello,

I serve as the Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County in Medford, Oregon. We have been providing services to children who experience abuse for over thirty years. We have cared for over 19 thousand children primarily from Jackson County. We provide over 5000 services annually to children in our community who have experienced or are suspected to have experienced child physical abuse, child sexual abuse and/or neglect.

I am requesting your support of Oregon Department of Justice POP 309 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 really 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. The children we serve deserve to have access to evidence based, trauma informed healing services. In order to retain our highly skilled staff, we need to be able to pay competitive wages with competitive benefits.

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 Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County used these funds to increase staff, to make long needed repairs to our facilities to include re-roofing, lead paint abatement, siding repairs, and replacement of worn out furnaces. Additionally, we have used the funding to move our organization into electronic records and HIPAA compliant virtual platforms to complete and store our documents.

CACs serve all children regardless of their family's ability to pay. While we do not charge the families served by our organization any out of pocket fees, there is a price that is not currently fully covered by any state or federal funding. This leaves many of our centers unable to serve children in a timely manner. Many smaller centers in smaller communities are unable to raise funds to support their programming and are dependent on state funding.

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We have a vision of all children who have experienced abuse in Oregon having access to evidenced based, trauma informed, healing services regardless of the zip code they live in.

Passing POP 309 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tammi Pitzen', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tammi Pitzen
Executive Director