



April 21, 2023

Dear Co Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

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 HB 2732, which includes \$6 million in funding for the 24 children's advocacy centers located across the state of Oregon. The Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County provides forensic interviews, forensic medical evaluation, treatment and diagnosis of child abuse, therapy interventions, and support and advocacy services to children who have experienced abuse. The Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County is a charter accredited member of the National Children's Alliance. This means we are held to a standard of care. We utilize trauma informed, evidenced based and culturally responsive treatment modalities. Each center across the state provides these services in a coordinated way using a multidisciplinary method.

Each children's advocacy center across the state provides these services that are critical to not only the children we serve but also to the multidisciplinary team member that refers these children to us. Law enforcement, child welfare and CASA utilize the information found as a result of our child abuse assessments to make decisions around child safety and to determine if there is any further steps to be taken through the criminal justice system.

Across the state children's advocacy centers continually report that their largest need is staffing, increasing staff hours or retaining their investment in experienced staff.

Children's Advocacy Centers have been working with the Legislature to increase state funding, and we are really thankful that our \$6 million dollar funding ask was included in the Christmas tree bill last budget. The Christmas bill tree funding as you know is just a one-time funding. We are asking that we hold progress that the Legislature made to protect kids served by the Children's Advocacy Centers. We are respectfully requesting \$6 million dollars during the 2023 Legislative session. HB 2732 which is in WMS contains this funding and the Oregon Department of Justice also put forward POP 309 which contains this same request.


Tammi Pitzen
Executive Director