



Disability  
Rights  
Oregon

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services  
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon  
DATE: February 13, 2023  
RE: HB 3079 – Support

Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ben Gurewitz, I am a public policy advocate for Disability Rights Oregon. I am writing in support of HB 3079 and provide and ensure a full continuum of services for Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth, those who are not in the physical custody of their parents or guardians, and who are homeless.

I hope you will join me in affirming housing as a basic human right for all Oregonians, especially our youth. Oregon has the 4th highest number of houseless youths in the nation. HB 3079 provides funding support for homeless youth services across Oregon through the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program, a model with a strong national reputation, for which Oregon is considered a leader. This Program provides youth with long-term housing support as well as a stable home, mentorship, and support system while they attend school. These bills will also dedicate funding to aiding school-aged youth and families to prevent evictions or rapidly rehouse them if they do become houseless.

In the United States, half of homeless adults first experienced houselessness in their youth. We know that by investing in services for this population we can and will deter lifetimes of housing instability and homelessness. Every child and young adult deserves to have access to safe and stable support services that help them thrive. HB 3079 ensures that it is a reality for our young Oregonians experiencing homelessness.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

### **About Disability Rights Oregon**

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State's Protection and Advocacy System.<sup>1</sup> We are authorized by Congress to protect, advocate, and enforce the rights of people with disabilities under the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State laws, investigate abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, and "pursue administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies".<sup>2</sup> We are also mandated to "educate policymakers" on matters related to people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

**If you have any questions regarding DRO's position on this legislation, please**

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<sup>1</sup> See ORS 192.517.

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).

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