



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

February 18, 2025

Representative Annessa Hartman, Chair
House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
900 Court St NE, H-283 Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3079

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

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in support of HB 3079, which will provide a more comprehensive continuum of services for Oregon's unaccompanied homeless youth.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to low and very low-income older adults, age 55 and over, experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County.

In many ways, the story of older adult homelessness is the story of vulnerable youth who did not get the help they needed at a critical point in time. Our most vulnerable seniors experiencing homelessness are likelier to have had their first experience of homelessness earlier in life and report more adverse life experiences and low income attainment in early adulthood.¹

Oregon is currently experiencing a rapid growth in the number of unaccompanied homeless youth. Between 2022 and 2023, there was a 33.6% increase in unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon.² Given this significant increase, Oregon now has the fourth highest number of homeless youth in the nation.³ Thus, it is critical that we continue investing in homeless youth services across Oregon through the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program – a model with a strong national reputation.

¹ Pathways to Homelessness Among Homeless Older Adults (2016), Rebecca T. Brown et. al. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0155065>

² The 2023 Annual Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress (December 2023), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-ahar-part-1.Pdf>

³ Ibid.

HB 3079 will provide funding assistance for the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program, which offers homeless youth long-term housing support as well as a stable home, mentorship, and support system while they attend school. This bill will also provide funding to expand or enhance existing shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, mental health and substance use services, and other transitional housing options for homeless youth. Lastly, HB 3079 will dedicate funding to prevent evictions for school-aged youth and families or rapidly rehouse them if they do become homeless.

We could do so much more for vulnerable seniors if our communities truly invested in prevention and long-term stability at the first opportunity. Ensuring our most vulnerable youth have the housing they need to pursue employment, training, and other opportunities during their transition to adulthood is a necessary part of preventing another generation from experiencing older adult homelessness.

We encourage your support of HB 3079. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Yoni Kahn
Advocacy Director
Northwest Pilot Project