



To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

From: Anthony Castaneda, SEIU 503

Date: 2/25/25

RE: SEIU 503 in support of HB 3079

Dear Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf and members of the committee,

My name is Anthony Castaneda, I am writing on behalf of SEIU 503 in support of HB 3079 to update 2022 cost estimates for the Department of Human Services (ODHS) to implement programs designed to support youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those aging out of foster care. The department should also look at accountability tools that funding is reaching foster youth in meaningful ways that lead to better outcomes.

SEIU 503 represents hundreds of social workers and case managers in Child Welfare at ODHS. These dedicated public employees work with thousands of young people, foster families, and providers to secure placement for foster youth.

With over 5000 youth in foster care system, these young people often face a perfect storm of challenges: disruptions in educational learning, lack of job experience, mental health struggles, trauma from their experiences in foster care, and few connections to family or community support. As a result, many are forced into unstable living situations, with homelessness becoming an all-too-real risk.

We know that targeted investments in the right services can transform the lives of youth aging out of foster care and prevent homelessness. In fact, there is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates how programs focused on housing stability, education, and emotional and social support can have a lasting, positive impact.

By updating the 2022 cost estimates and increasing funding for youth homelessness programs, we can provide these young people with the opportunities they need to succeed and contribute positively to society. Now is the time to act and ensure that these vulnerable youth have the resources and support they need to thrive.

By voting Aye, you will recognize that the need is urgent. By prioritizing housing stability, education, mental health services, and community support, we can create a future where youth aging out of foster care have a real chance at success and a life free from homelessness.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

