

February 28, 2025

**Senate Committee on Human Services**  
**RE: SB909**

Senator Gelsler-Blouin and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 909, which seeks to address a critical gap in service for children with serious emotional disturbances. This bill is a crucial step toward ensuring that all children, regardless of family income, have access to the care and support they need to thrive at home.

As a parent of a child for whom there were no home or community-based services available as behavioral symptoms escalated over a period of years, I have firsthand experience with the significant challenges families face. My son spent 38 months in a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility. Upon his discharge, we again faced the absolute lack of services and support that would have enabled him to live safely and successfully at home. As a result, we were forced to make the forever life-altering decision to seek an out-of-home placement. The impact of these experiences has been the source of an indelible injury for my son and enduring trauma for every member of our family.

For most, the family home is a place of refuge where children feel safe, loved, and supported. Institutional placements, while sometimes necessary, disrupt critical relationships, unique family dynamics, and the everyday experiences within which children struggle, learn, and grow. Serious emotional disturbance occurs without regard to parental income. Home and community-based services which recognize the needs of the child and family are vital in maintaining the stability and continuity that are so important for a child's development and a family's wellbeing. They allow children with complex needs to thrive within a familiar environment while receiving individualized care and support.

By emphasizing the importance of home and community-based services and stipulating parental income disregard, SB 909 creates a more inclusive and supportive system and ensures that all children have access to the support they need to flourish. I strongly urge you to support this bill which supports the children, youth, and families Oregon's systems exist to serve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Carol Dickey, MBA, MS  
Advocate for the Family Voice