

Testimony Opposing HB 3835

Dear Oregon House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services:

We, survivors of out-of-state facilities, strongly oppose HB 3835 and urge the committee to vote against it. This bill would allow Oregon to resume sending youth to out-of-state treatment facilities with minimal oversight—including those with documented histories of abuse, neglect, and even deaths—as long as they remain licensed in their respective states. This weakens protections for Oregon youth, exposing them to inadequate safety standards in poorly regulated systems across states.

The decision to bring Oregon youth home was based on overwhelming evidence that out-of-state placements are dangerous. Despite new laws in some states, the fundamental risks remain. Residential treatment centers across the country continue to face reports of abuse, improper restraints, and preventable deaths. Licensing agencies struggle to enforce protections, and many violations go unreported or are quietly removed from records. Oregon should not send its youth into these conditions.

One example is Family Help & Wellness (FHW), a company headquartered in Salem, Oregon, that operates multiple “treatment” facilities across four states. After safety concerns led to the shutdown of Oregon programs previously owned by FHW’s predecessor, the company continued operating facilities elsewhere with troubling records. Their programs—including Elevations RTC in Utah and Asheville Academy in North Carolina—have faced repeated abuse allegations and licensing violations. Under HB 3835, these facilities would still qualify as acceptable placements for Oregon youth simply because they remain licensed in their respective states. Most disturbing is the 2024 death of 12-year-old Clark Harman at Trails Carolina, an FHW-owned program. His death—ruled a homicide—occurred while the facility was fully licensed.

These are not isolated incidents or facilities but part of a widespread, systemic problem. Investigations reveal a nationwide pattern of abuse and neglect in residential programs for youth. Licensing agencies are overwhelmed, providing weak oversight, while ineffective reporting systems allow abuse to go unreported or concealed until media investigations or legal action bring it to light. Survivors’ voices are routinely ignored. Meanwhile, many facilities manipulate their public image by blocking negative reviews, soliciting fake positive ones, and hiring firms to scrub bad press.

Oregon has led the way in protecting youth, and undoing that progress would be a dangerous mistake. We urge the committee to stand firm and vote NO on HB 3835 to keep Oregon’s children safe and close to home.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Survivors of Elevations RTC, a Family Help & Wellness Program

- [Elevations RTC: Former Students Report Injuries and Isolation at Utah facility for Troubled Teens](#)
- [The Kids Are Not Alright: How Private Equity Profits Off of Behavioral Health Services for Vulnerable and At-Risk Youth](#)
- [Warehouses of Neglect: How Taxpayers Are Funding Systemic Abuse in Youth Residential Treatment Facilities](#)