



March 19, 2025

Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth and young adults. As the Executive Director of Nexus Family Healing – Walden Crossing we are dedicated to changing the course of a child's life by stabilizing families and strengthening mental health. I urge you to support HB 3585, a vital measure to ensure the stability and effectiveness of Oregon's child and family services.

One of the most pressing challenges we face is ensuring that when children need a safe place, there is a bed available. However, this is only possible if we have a strong and supported workforce. The dedicated individuals who provide these critical services do so with passion and commitment, yet they are often discouraged by a system that prioritizes scrutiny over support.

Recruiting and retaining staff remains an uphill battle—not because people lack the will to serve, but because the investigative process is unnecessarily punitive. Workers and foster parents who make honest mistakes, or simply misunderstand supervision requirements, often find themselves subjected to lengthy, stressful investigations. This uncertainty drives dedicated professionals out of the field, not due to a lack of commitment, but because the risks to their personal and professional lives become too great.

Our organization provides community mental health services, residential treatment, and foster care/adoption services to children struggling with emotional and behavioral health issues. Oregon must shift away from a culture of fear-based regulation and toward a model that prioritizes learning, growth, and support. HB 3585 is a crucial step in that direction, helping to build a system supporting caregivers and strengthens services for our most vulnerable children.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring children, youth, young adults and their families have access to high-quality supports and services so they too will have an opportunity to thrive and live



their best lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Toni Miller'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Toni' and last name 'Miller' clearly distinguishable.

Sincerely,

Toni Miller

Executive Director