



Chair Hartman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Tri-County Behavioral Health Providers Association (TCBHPA), we are expressing our strong support for House Bill 3835. As a professional association representing behavioral health providers across Oregon, we believe this bill is a critical step in addressing the growing challenges that our state's children face in accessing the care, safety, and support they need to thrive.

Our members work directly with children and families dealing with a wide range of complex issues, including mental health disorders, trauma, addiction, and behavioral concerns. Over the years, we have seen firsthand the devastating effects of an increasingly strained system of care. Oregon has lost significant capacity in licensed residential treatment facilities and foster care programs, leaving many children without appropriate care options. In some cases, children are being placed in temporary lodging situations or are left without the services they require to overcome the challenges they face. Schools, while dedicated, are ill-equipped to handle these complex needs on their own.

House Bill 3835 directly addresses these systemic gaps and will significantly improve Oregon's ability to serve its most vulnerable children. The bill's provision for clarifying standards related to abuse, restraint, and seclusion is critical for creating a consistent and transparent framework that ensures children are protected in all settings. We believe these uniform definitions will eliminate confusion among service providers and enhance the quality of care, helping to build a safer environment for both children and caregivers.

Additionally, the bill's provisions that increase access to specialized treatment – including allowing carefully considered exceptions for out-of-state placements – are essential for ensuring that children who require specialized care unavailable in Oregon are not left without options. The ability to access such care can make a significant difference in outcomes for children struggling with mental health and behavioral challenges. Furthermore, the additional oversight and accountability measures for out-of-state providers will ensure that Oregon's standards are upheld, even when services are provided outside the state.

We are also particularly supportive of the provisions that improve safety and accountability in schools. Our association believes that educators must have the support and guidance they need to protect children in their care. By ensuring that restraints and seclusion are properly regulated and investigated, this bill will allow schools to prioritize student safety while also ensuring that educators can perform their duties without the fear of unjust accusations.

We urge you to support House Bill 3835. This bill is a critical investment in the well-being of Oregon's children and in the professionals who work tirelessly to provide care and support. We believe that by passing this legislation, we can create a stronger, more effective system of care that ensures every child has access to the services they need, when they need them, and in a safe and supportive environment.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We look forward to your continued support of HB 3835 and the positive impact it will have on the children and families we serve.

Sincerely,

TCBHPA Board of Directors