

March 26, 2025

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and families. My name is Cheyenne Nichols and I am a Program Director at Maslow Project, a community-based nonprofit focused on homeless youth services in Oregon. I would like to advocate for increased funding for the Youth Emergency Housing Assistance (YEHA) program through HB 5011.

Oregon has the fourth highest number of homeless youth in the nation. Every day, I witness the devastating impact of housing instability on our children's education, health, and future opportunities. At Maslow Project, we are serving over 2,000 youth and families each year, to end youth homelessness sooner with a holistic approach that builds resilience and preserves hope.

Sarah is 7 and lives in Southern Oregon. She missed kindergarten and the start of 1<sup>st</sup> grade because of her family's severe housing instability. Thanks to the funding our agency received from the Youth Emergency Housing Assistance, Sarah has now been permanently housed and started her first ever day of school this past fall. She had a big smile on her face and said it was the best day ever!

Looking at HB 5011's Housing Stabilization Programs allocation of \$751,011,611, increasing YEHA funding to \$15 million represents a small but crucial investment in preventing and addressing youth homelessness.

I strongly urge you to increase YEHA funding to \$15 million in HB 5011. This investment would triple our capacity to:

- Provide emergency shelter and rapid rehousing assistance
- Support families with housing navigation and barrier removal
- Offer wraparound services that provides an upstream approach to keep families stable and children in school

The YEHA program works. Through our partnerships with schools and housing providers, we're helping families maintain stability and keeping children in their classrooms. But we need your help to reach more families in crisis and provide a better chance at lifelong stability and success. Thank you for your consideration of this vital investment in Oregon's children and families.

Sincerely,

Cheyenne Nichols  
Program Director  
Maslow Project