



March 26, 2024

Dear Chair Evans, Chair Broadman, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Homestead Youth & Family Services, Inc. to express **strong support for the approval of the Oregon Youth Authority's (OYA) budget as outlined in SB 5041**. Homestead is a contracted BRS residential treatment provider with OYA. We provide treatment and care for youth in the custody of the Oregon Youth Authority. Our mission is to provide services to support young people and families in becoming healthy, productive citizens in their home communities across Oregon. As a long term contracted provider and partner of OYA, we recognize the vital role OYA plays in supporting youth and families across the state.

Oregon service providers like Homestead have experienced an increase in the level of acuity among youth in their care, a trend that OYA is also experiencing. We find ourselves needing to expand our skills and elevate our specialized training to effectively address extensive trauma histories, emotional and psychiatric challenges and extreme behavioral issues in our client population. To effectively address these challenges and maintain the quality of care, it is imperative that the investments outlined in SB 5041 are approved.

Key components of this budget include:

1. **Preserving Continuing Service Levels:** Maintaining current staffing levels in community programs is crucial. The proposed 6% increase in the wage index for residential service providers is necessary to sustain service capacity and minimize disruptions for the youth in care.
2. **POP 304 – Facility Renovations:** The budget includes funding for long-overdue renovations to the MacLaren health clinic, ensuring OYA can provide constitutionally required health care. Delays in facility improvements often lead to significantly higher repair costs over time. These renovations are critical for maintaining the health and well-being of youth in OYA custody, enabling them to fully engage in services and rehabilitation.
3. **POP 551 – Reentry Support Services:** This provision establishes a dedicated position to coordinate reentry services, addressing the pressing need to prevent homelessness and housing instability among youth exiting OYA. Investments in rental assistance, financial literacy programs, training, and outreach services will improve the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community.

SB 5041 makes essential investments in the future of OYA youth, ensuring that they receive the care, stability, and support necessary for rehabilitation and successful transition back into society. I urge your support for this budget to uphold Oregon's commitment to the well-being and future success of its youth.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you require any further information from me or my agency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elisa Doebler-Irvine", with the initials "PMD LPL" written below it.

Elisa Doebler-Irvine, Ph.D. LPC
Executive Director