

SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council

3/28/2025

Dear Joint Committee on Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee,

The System of Care Advisory Council, SOCAC, strongly supports POP 112 and its inclusion in budget bill HB 5526. We urge the members of Ways and Means to allocate \$7 M to ODHS-CW, which will receive a 1:1 Federal Funds match, for a total of \$14 M in funding for prevent Oregon children from entering into foster care.

The Families First Prevention Services Act makes federal funding available earlier in the process that ODHS-CW used to have to wait to spend only on foster care services. Now, it can be spent on critical services to prevent the need for foster care— from in-home training and family therapy to mental health and substance abuse programs. This is in strong alignment with System of Care values, integrating whole family supports to prevent children from moving ‘deeper’ into our child serving systems.

Approving this funding package will help ensure more children in foster care are placed with families by directing state and federal funds to support placements in families. This funding will ensure that evidence-based approaches informed by the experiences of caseworkers, parents and children themselves are implemented in Oregon. We know from the data that kids do best when they are with their families or in family settings, but current funding streams prioritize separation and foster care services. Nearly 5000 children are in foster care in Oregon today, and while important efforts to reduce this number are underway, this critical work will be improved by passage of HB 5526.

The SOCAC strongly supports passage of HB 5526 and the inclusion of the \$7 M funding, making Oregon eligible for the \$7 M FF match, to invest in foster care prevention in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration. Any questions about this letter of support can be sent to SOCAC Executive Director, Anna Williams, at anna.k.williams@oha.oregon.gov.

Sincerely,

System of Care Advisory Council