



KIDS FIRST

a children's advocacy center

April 1, 2025

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Dear Co Chairs Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety,

My name is Patty Perlow, and I write on behalf of Kids FIRST, the child advocacy center serving Lane County children who have been victims of physical or sexual abuse or witness to domestic violence. We urgently request that the Legislature fund Children's Advocacy Centers at Current Service Level this biennium. All 24 Oregon Children's Advocacy Centers, including Kids FIRST, are facing a significant funding cliff that threatens children's access to the critical services that Children's Advocacy Centers Provide.

I urgently request your support of the below funding, which will provide for Current Service Levels for Children's Advocacy Centers:

- HB 3196- \$18.5M to Backfill Federal Cuts to Victims of Crime Act (VOCA): Children's Advocacy Centers and other victims services providers receive federal funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Following the close of the 2024 Session, Oregon was alerted that this federal funding is being reduced by 42%. Without your action, projected funding losses range from \$10,000 to \$498,000 per Children's Advocacy Center, with an average loss of \$122,794.

- DOJ POP #327: Stabilizing State Dollars: The 2021 and 2023 Legislatures allocated \$6M in funding to Children's Advocacy Centers to increase their capacity to serve more children. This funding was successful in increasing capacity, with most CACs using the funds to hire new staff. DOJ POP #327 ensures that this funding, as well as similar funding for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs continues at Current Service Level so that these critical staff and increased capacity can be maintained.

If these funds are not allocated, it will drastically diminish the capacity of CACs to provide essential support. These potential cuts will leave many child abuse victims without access to trauma-informed care and legal advocacy, resulting in long-term psychological harm and a reduced ability for our justice system to protect our most vulnerable.



NATIONAL
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ACCREDITED
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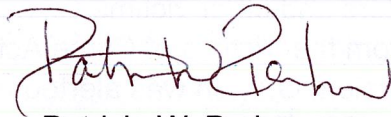
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kidsfirstcenter.net

The effectiveness of police, prosecution, and child welfare agencies is closely tied to the support provided by Children's Advocacy Centers. These systems are interdependent, and the work of CACs is crucial in ensuring that child abuse cases are handled efficiently, effectively, and with the best interests of the child in mind. When CACs are underfunded, the strain is felt across all related systems, leading to diminished outcomes for child abuse victims and increased burdens on already stretched resources.

Children's Advocacy Centers are at a critical juncture. Without funding from the Legislature to backfill cuts to federal funding (HB 3196) and Continued Service Level of existing state dollars (DOJ POP #327), we will see reduced staffing, increased wait times, fewer children receiving critical services, and delays in child abuse investigations. I cannot overstate the urgency of the above funding requests.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia W. Perlow', written in a cursive style.

Patricia W. Perlow
Executive Director