

Good afternoon, Co-chairs Lieber and Sanchez, members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Leslie Drews and I'm currently a Peer Counselor for Looking Glass Community Services at PEER Shelter funded by BHRN Lane County . I am here today to talk about HB5006 in regards to the State Budget. Peer Shelter is an emergency low barrier facility that consists of 24 beds available for unhoused youth and their children. We have helped many youth by offering "dignity and worth of a person" by utilizing Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. We are a stepping stone that helps our clients with their personal growth and developments as well as establishes a safe place with stability to achieve their own self-actualization.

I feel that by not meeting our budget needs, the loss of our program could be detrimental for society as a whole and qualifies for the emergency funding allocated in SECTION 1. of HB5006 - "In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Emergency Board, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$50,000,000, for the purposes for which the Emergency Board lawfully may allocate funds" (*Redirect to OLIS*, n.d.).

In short, it is our moral responsibility and obligation as a society to support those in need, not just in times of crisis, but consistently, to ensure long-term stability and success. Failing to invest in shelters like ours doesn't just mean fewer beds, it means more youth cycling through emergency rooms, jails, and long-term welfare systems.

The cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of helping people stabilize, heal, and grow into self-sufficient adults. Emergency funding is critical now, but so is our continued commitment to the long-term well-being of our most vulnerable community members.

Thank you for your time.

Leslie T. Drews