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Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 5014 and HB 3196, which will provide critical funding to Oregon's children's advocacy centers in the face of substantial federal funding reductions. One such child advocacy center (CAC) is CARES Northwest, which provides integral support to the children and families here in Multnomah County. Without your action, CARES Northwest will lose \$498,000 as a result of the reduction in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) federal funding (HB 5014). By supporting HB 3196, you will ensure the continuation of existing state funding levels for the 2025 biennium, which will allow CARES Northwest to continue at its current service level.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, through our Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team (MDT), routinely partners with CARES Northwest in child abuse investigations and prosecution. We are very fortunate to have the high level of expertise and dedication that CARES Northwest provides within our community. The tireless work of CARES Northwest makes children safer and allows children to develop into healthy adults.

Founded in 1987, CARES Northwest is the oldest and largest CAC in the state, bringing with it nearly four decades' worth of expertise supporting and empowering children victims. The medical providers at CARES Northwest represent four health care systems in our community, working together to draw on their individual training and experience in the fields of child physical and sexual abuse and neglect. The medical expertise CARES Northwest's providers bring to investigations is critical to the successful prosecution of child abuse in our county. In addition to medical assessments, CARES Northwest offers support to children through its experienced and well-trained child forensic interviews, who follow best practices when interviewing a child suspected to be the victim of or witness to abuse. Finally, CARES Northwest's therapy program, with a commitment to equity and inclusion, helps children heal and find their way forward in the world.

Our office is proud to partner with CARES Northwest because they provide essential services necessary to supporting and protecting children who have suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. By supporting this legislation, you are prioritizing the health, safety, and well-being in our communities. I strongly urge your support of these bills.

Respectfully,

Nathan Vasquez
District Attorney
Multnomah County District Attorney's Office