

To the Honorable Senators and Representatives of the Oregon Legislature,

I respectfully ask for your time, attention, and openness to my voice in this conversation surrounding HB 3838. I come to you not only as a seasoned provider with over 30 years of experience in Oregon's long-term care system, but as someone who has walked alongside families, residents, care staff, and business owners at every stage of this journey. My request is simple: I respectfully ask to be part of this dialogue. I bring a deep understanding of the adult foster home model, but a practical and balanced perspective on how this bill will impact our communities, from every angle. This is more than policy; this is personal. And it is my sincere hope that you'll consider the insight of someone who has lived this work, and continues to advocate for its future.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3838, which, if passed, would fundamentally harm and potentially dismantle one of Oregon's most effective, compassionate, and community-based long-term care options.

AFHs are not institutions. They are true homes where care is personal, relational, and often life-saving. We serve individuals who are too complex for independent living, and too vulnerable, or unqualified, for assisted living or memory care. These are the placements no one else can take. And time and time again, AFHs step in, show up, and save lives.

If passed, HB 3838 would impose unnecessary and burdensome regulations on small providers already stretched thin, forcing many to close their doors, not because they lack heart, but because they lack the administrative capacity to survive under policies written without their voice or lived reality in mind.

This bill does not solve the core issues plaguing our long-term care system. It doesn't solve workforce shortages, low provider retention, or rising care needs. Instead, it will:

- Eliminate one of the last flexible options for Oregon's most complex residents
- Reduce available beds statewide at a time when demand is growing
- Push vulnerable residents into higher-cost, institutional settings
- Destroy the livelihood of hundreds of committed AFH providers who have built their homes on the foundation of service and care for our vulnerable population

Adult Foster Homes have long been a safety net, a solution, and a source of stability for people who fall through the cracks of larger systems. These small businesses are owned and operated by people, often women, immigrants, and people of color and culture who have devoted their

lives to serving and caring. They are not asking for less accountability but to be heard, respected, and included in shaping policy that directly impacts them and the people they serve.

It is critically important that Adult Foster Homes (AFHs) are not grouped into the same regulatory framework as larger long-term care settings such as Assisted Living (AL), Independent Living (IL), or Residential Care Facilities (RCFs). These models operate on entirely different scales, with varying staffing structures, resident capacities, and scopes of care. AFHs are intimate, personalized care environments, typically serving no more than five residents, where the provider is often also the caregiver, living in the home and offering 24/7 hands-on support. These homes are deeply relational, flexible, and responsive to residents in ways that larger institutions cannot mirror. Applying the same rules, regulations, or expectations across these vastly different models risks crippling the AFH system entirely. I urge you to consider a more nuanced and thoughtful approach that honors the essential role AFHs play and ensures they are regulated to reflect the vital care they provide to some of Oregon's most vulnerable residents.

Senators, I urge you to oppose HB 3838 and prevent its passage. Do not let legislation be written without direct provider input to redefine an industry that is already functioning with policy difficulties. However, they weather well with excellence and sacrifice regardless.

This bill would not improve care; it would remove it. It would not protect vulnerable people, and it would displace them. And it would not solve the problems; it would create new ones.

Vote NO on HB 3838. Stand with the providers, families, and residents whose lives depend on this care.

With deep respect and unwavering resolve,

Jennifer Bustamante

Founder & CEO, Embrace Age Prepared

Former Adult Foster Home Provider | Long-Term Care Advocate Of
Salem, Oregon