

To: Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety

Date: April 2, 2025



RE: Support for HB3835A

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, Members of the House Committee on Rules

I am writing to urge and encourage your support for HB 3835A and to ensure that it passes out of this committee to a full vote on the House floor to then be sent to the Senate. It is clear that this is a much-needed piece of bi-partisan legislation that has broad support.

We know that Oregon's system of care for our youth is broken - but it IS salvageable and it should be reformed! With HB3835A, we have the opportunity to begin the process of building a stronger and more robust system that ensures our children have the care they need and deserve when they need it.

In 2019, this legislative body enacted SB 1, which created the System of Care Advisory Council (SOCAC) with a mandate to analyze and propose solutions to the total mess Oregon had made of its child welfare and other systems of care. Appointing Executive Director Williams, with her legislative experience and her commitment to children and families, spoke volumes of the importance of its mandate. SOCAC has taken its job, and the task bestowed upon it very seriously. I have the utmost respect for the professionalism and integrity of all its members, be they advocates, agency officials, nonprofit leaders, parents or youth with lived experience. I believe it is the legislature's job now to support the work they asked of the council, and the hard work of its members, by supporting HB 3835A

Over the last 3 years, SOCAC has invested countless hours engaging with all stakeholders, including parents, self-advocates, youth, providers, agency representatives, psychologists, pediatricians, tribal representatives, advocacy groups like Disability Rights Oregon, and the public. Through that process, numerous issues have been identified and discussed extensively about how to ensure children in state care can access needed services and are safe from abuse. The product of this work is HB 3835.

HB3835A It is a big bill and it is a complex one. It does not solve every problem in the child welfare system. It will not eradicate abuse and neglect in our communities. But it is a step forward in reforming our systems and amending our laws based on the most current, trauma-informed and professionally validated approaches.

We should not be afraid to try. We should be afraid of doing nothing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Fulford", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Fulford, Executive Director