



Oregon Alliance

5/12/2025

Chair Bowman, Vice Chair Drazan, Vice Chair Pham, and members of the committee.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3585, a critical step toward ensuring the stability and effectiveness of Oregon's child and family services. As CEO of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs, I represent a coalition of over thirty organizations providing essential services—including proctor care, therapeutic foster care, shelter, and residential support—to children, youth, and families across our state.

Our current system lacks the capacity to meet the needs of children and youth. Service providers are a vital and critical resource needed to ensure children are safe and their needs are met. Required system capacity can only be achieved with a strong, well-supported workforce. The dedicated professionals in this field work tirelessly to provide high-quality care, yet they face significant barriers due to a regulatory system that fosters fear rather than growth.

Recruiting and retaining staff is an ongoing challenge, not because of a lack of passion or commitment, but because the unnecessary investigative process instills fear in the workforce and creates disruptions of placement and relationships for the youth in care. Employees and foster parents who make a mistake can find themselves under prolonged investigation, uncertain of their future. Many leave the field entirely, not due to a lack of dedication, but because of the personal and professional risks.

I have seen firsthand the emotional toll this takes. A dedicated employee who made a single mistake spent months under investigation, not knowing if she would have a job at the end of it. Foster parents, fearful of how an inquiry might impact their own livelihoods, have considered walking away. These experiences do not create a stronger workforce or better outcomes for children; they create instability, burnout, and reluctance to serve.

To improve the quality of care for Oregon's most vulnerable children, we must move away from a punitive, fear-based approach and embrace a system that prioritizes learning, continuous improvement, and support for those on the front lines. HB 3835 offers a pathway to that necessary shift.

I urge you to support this legislation and help us build a system that supports our workforce, strengthens our services, and ultimately improves the lives of the children and families we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vera Stoulil
CEO, Oregon Alliance

Empowering Organizations,
Transforming Lives