



Good Morning, Oregon State Legislature,

I am a constituent in your district, and I represent Kairos Northwest as the Executive Director. I am writing today to encourage your **support for HB 3835A**. This important bill will help programs like ours continue to provide the care Oregon youth critically need, as well as help open the pathway to increased access to care for children in our foster system. Did you know that kids in foster care cannot access the same services as kids on the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). HB 3835A will change that.

Kairos Northwest is a mental health agency that has been supporting Oregon residents since 1977. Kairos collaborates with young people, families, and communities to provide intensive mental health services and supports, promote mental wellness, teach independent living skills, and instill hope. We offer outpatient and respite services, treatment foster care, and residential treatment homes. We are primarily funded by Oregon Health Plan and receive grants and donations from our communities

Oregon's system of care for our youth is broken, but we have an opportunity to begin the process of building a strong, robust, and lasting system that ensures our children have the care they need and deserve when they need it. No one wants to continue down this path we are on which has left Oregon ranked last in the nation in youth care accessibility. More importantly, no one wants to continue to let our children down. As providers, we need your help to allow us the opportunity to be part of the solution moving forward.

Over the last 3 years, the System of Care Advisory Council (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.

In 2019, this esteemed legislative body enacted SB 1, which built SOCAC to do this important work. It took its job, and the task bestowed upon it very seriously. 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 and supporting access with accountability for Oregon's youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Harle
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