

May 12, 2025

Dear Representatives and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you as both a professional who works with children in public education and as a parent of two neurodivergent children who have complex behavioral health needs. My own children have experienced school trauma and cannot currently access traditional school due to limited staff knowledge and training in how to support their needs. I am asking you to oppose HB 3835, as this bill attempts to solve problems related to the current state of Systems of Care in Oregon, but it negates the harms that will result when protections and regulations are loosened which have been implemented to protect our most vulnerable children and adolescents.

I do not deny that the current systems need to change, but HB 3835 is not the answer. Rather, we need to provide appropriate support, education, and training to professionals working at all levels within education and other Systems of Care. Punishing youth does not teach them skills, nor will it help them “behave” better. Restraint and seclusion are forms of punishment and result in trauma, thus, further exacerbating situations resulting in increased costs for Systems of Care and society. We need to listen to those with lived experience, and we need look upstream to truly understand what is driving distressed behaviors in our youth and to find real solutions.

I beg you to protect the safety and wellbeing of Oregon’s most vulnerable youth by opposing HB 3835. In moving forward, I request there be support for collaborative, evidenced-based solutions that acknowledge the complexity of the issues around Oregon’s Systems of Care. Mona Delahooke Ph.D., Lori Desautels Ph.D., and Ross Greene, Ph.D. are well-respected professionals who provide evidenced-based alternatives to supporting youth with distressed behaviors.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony,

Nicole Collings, M.A., CCC-SLP