

Submitter: Aubrey Kelly
On Behalf Of: ODHS
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835
Thanks!

Chair Bowman, Vice Chair Drazen, Vice Chair Pham and members of the committee, my name is Aubrey Kelly. I have worked for the Oregon Department of Human Services for 17 years. I have spent 12 years as a Licensing Coordinator of Child Caring Agencies. I have dedicated my professional career to keeping children safe.

In 2019, I was assigned to the out of state programs where ODHS had children placed. In June of 2020, ODHS brought the children who were still in out of state programs back to Oregon. In the summer of 2024, after a pre-placement visit by me, extensive research and recommendations of medical professionals, ODHS made the life-saving decision to place a child in a program in Arizona. While ODHS broke the law, ODHS also saved the child's life.

ODHS learned many lessons from the past, when we learned what we needed to do better, we did better. HB 3835 allows for children to be placed in out of state programs with extensive oversight to include a pre-placement visit of the program by ODHS licensing staff and a minimum of in person visits with the child every 15 days.

The process to license a program to become an Oregon Child Caring Agency typically takes months. The child who went to the program in Arizona did not have months or even weeks to wait. Immediate decisions and actions were required to save the child's life. I visited the child in Arizona frequently. I am unable to put into words the experience of watching a child go from dying to thriving in seven and a half weeks. I will forever be proud of the work we did and am even prouder we can replicate that work for other children.

With the passage of this bill, we will be taking a critical step to ensure all Oregon children have access to life saving care they so desperately need and deserve.

Thank you so much,
Aubrey Kelly