

Submitter: Lori McClure

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835

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Dear Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazan and Pham,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for my strong support of HB 3835. My name is Lori McClure, and I am responsible for approving temporary lodging for children and young adults in the custody of Child Welfare when efforts to locate placement have been exhausted. I have worked with Child Welfare for the last 25 years and I have been in my current role since 2020.

I meet with Child Welfare teams and community partners every day who are working to support children and young adults who have been denied access to needed services and supports for which they are recommended. Denials from all but the highest levels of care often cite aggression as a reason for the denial.

Restrictive and unclear statutes have created a culture of fear and an inability to safely manage children with aggression in programs due to risk to the child and to others, including both staff and other children in the program.

I see what happens to children and young adults who are denied access to needed services and supports. At times, they are referred to an even more restrictive settings, or maybe a resource parent is located who is willing to care for them short term until they disrupt for reasons similar to the denial reasons, creating multiple moves in a child's life. In some cases, there are no options, and they are approved by myself or my peer for temporary lodging which is not an adequate option for any child or young adult. When children and young adults are not able to access the services and the support they need, it is not uncommon for increasing escalations to occur in the community, law enforcement and crisis are called more frequently and there are increasingly common trips to emergency rooms. This is not ok for kids.

Children and young adults in Oregon deserve to have their needs met in the least restrictive, most appropriate setting, including children and young adults in Child Welfare custody. They should have access to services and supports that are needed to help them be healthy and safe. They currently do not. You have an opportunity to change this.

HB 3835 is a step in the right direction, clarifying definitions around restraint and seclusion and providing clarity and distinguishing between child abuse and program or provider violations. It allows for children and young adults to access the care they need even if that care is not available in the state of Oregon. It continues to have limits, oversight and reporting on key areas including restraint and seclusion and any utilization of out of state placement. It does not reduce protection for children and

young adults in the Child Welfare system, but it does create a pathway to providing adequate supports to children and young adults in need.

I respectfully request that the House Rules Committee to pass HB 3835A without delay so it may advance to the full Legislature.

Respectfully,

Lori McClure

ODHS – Child Welfare