

Testimony of Stephanie Alvstad, CEO, J Bar J Youth Services
In Support of HB 3970 – Meeting the Needs of Oregon’s Houseless Youth (YEH)

Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazen and Pham, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Stephanie Alvstad, and I am the CEO of J Bar J Youth Services. I also serve as a board member of Alliance4Kids and am an active member of the Oregon Alliance. I am here to express my strong support for HB 3970 on behalf of shelter providers across Oregon who are dedicated to serving some of our state’s most vulnerable young people—youth experiencing homelessness (YEH).

Last year, through our Cascade Youth & Family Center program, we served 432 youth and provided over 10,000 bed nights of shelter and support in Central Oregon. Our work goes far beyond providing a safe place to sleep—we aim to empower youth with the resources, guidance, and opportunities they need to transition into safe, stable, and independent living.

Let me share a few stories that illustrate the life-changing impact of these services.

A 17-year-old boy was living in a motel with his mother until she was admitted to the state hospital. He reached out to us for help. We welcomed him into our shelter, gave him a hot meal and a shower, and asked how we could support him. His first request was to return to high school. With our help, he re-enrolled, graduated, and eventually secured a job and his own apartment.

Another youth, a 19-year-old young woman, came to us after living in her car. She was already employed and continued working while staying at our shelter. With time, support, and her own determination, she saved enough money to move into her own apartment.

These are just two examples among many. Each story represents a life changed and a path diverted from chronic adult homelessness.

HB 3970 is critical to expanding and strengthening the services our youth need. This legislation will enhance the continuum of care for youth experiencing homelessness by investing in the workforce, supporting substance use and behavioral health services, and expanding the Oregon Housing and Community Services' Family Homelessness Prevention programs.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 3970. By passing this bill, we take a significant step toward ensuring that Oregon’s youth have the opportunity to thrive in safety, stability, and dignity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephanie Alvstad
CEO, J Bar J Youth Services

