

**Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Pham, and Members of the Committee,**

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults. My name is Dr. Shawn T. Daley, and I am writing in strong support of HB 3970 and its efforts to ensure a full continuum of services for Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth and families.

My passion for this work began during my service with AmeriCorps in Portland, where I worked directly with members of our houseless community—an experience that opened my eyes to the complexity and dignity of those navigating life without stable housing. Later, as a high school classroom teacher, I saw firsthand the extraordinary challenges faced by students who were trying to learn and grow academically while experiencing homelessness. The lack of a consistent, safe space deeply impacted not just their academic performance, but their sense of hope and belonging.

Today, I serve as Board Chair of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), which supports a range of programs that uplift vulnerable Oregonians. One of EMO's programs, Second Home, provides stable housing and mentorship for unaccompanied high school students. I've witnessed how even modest interventions—like connecting a student with a safe place to sleep—can radically change a young person's trajectory and allow them to re-engage with their education and future.

I hope you will join me in affirming housing as a basic human right for all Oregonians. HB 3970 provides funding for homeless youth services in rural Oregon through the Youth Emergency Housing Program. This program offers flexible funding to prevent family homelessness through resources such as rent assistance, transportation, and legal support. HB 3970 also expands or enhances existing shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, and behavioral health and substance use services for houseless youth.

In the United States, half of homeless adults first experienced homelessness in their youth. We know that by investing in services for this population, we can and will deter lifetimes of housing instability. Every child and young adult deserves safe and stable support systems that help them thrive. HB 3970 is an essential step toward making that vision real for Oregon's most vulnerable youth.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn T. Daley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shawn" and last name "Daley" clearly legible.

Shawn T. Daley, PhD  
Chair, Board of the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon