



Oregon Women's Rights Coalition

HB 3970 Youth Experiencing Homelessness-Support

Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazan and Pham and members of the committee,

The Oregon Women's Rights Coalition supports the multi-pronged effort to help our youth who are experiencing homelessness. Over the years we have watched as the program has evolved.

We are fully supportive of expanded services for this group of Oregonians.

There are many reasons why youth are sometimes unstable and leave their family home. These young people need help as they try to stabilize their lives.

Several years ago, I was on an ivy pull with a group of at-risk teenagers who were helping with the project. They were there under the supervision of one of their teachers. I overheard a teenage girl say "I need to find someplace to stay. My mom has a new boyfriend, and he doesn't like me, so my mom kicked me out."

This is not a new issue, but we are now more aware of the needs.

At one of my high school's reunions, I was in conversation with a classmate whom I had been in school since the 7th grade. He shared with me that prior to our senior year he got a job and a small apartment on his own because he needed to get away from the violence in his home. He told very few people. He went on with his life becoming a union painter and was enjoying his pension.

If programs like Youth Experiencing Homelessness had existed then, he would have had more support as he juggled school and work. He might have chosen a different path as he is very bright and a talented artist.

Please support HB 3970 with as many resources as possible. Our youth are our future.

Marcia Kelley

Public Policy Advocate

Email: owrcadvocacy@gmail.com PO Box 957. Clackamas OR 97051