



June 2, 2015

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazen, Vice-Chair Pham, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults. On behalf of the Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO), we ask for your support of House Bill (HB) 3970, which expands the established Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) within the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS).

HSCO is a network of human services advocates taking action on basic human needs. Our members agree that Oregon's distinction as a national leader in unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness is an all-hands-on-deck emergency. We support the YEHP because it addresses this crisis from all directions, including immediate emergency housing, medium-term transitional needs, and long-term prevention.

HB 3970 provides funding for homeless youth services in rural Oregon through the Youth Emergency Housing Program. This Program provides flexible funding to help prevent family homelessness through things like rent assistance, transportation and legal services. HB 3970 also provides funding to expand or enhance existing shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, behavioral health and substance use services for homeless 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 that we can and will deter lifetimes of housing instability and homelessness. Every child and young adult deserves to have access to safe and stable support services that help them thrive. HB 3970 ensures that is a reality for our young Oregonians experiencing homelessness.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

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