



June 2, 2025

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazan, Pham, and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs and its members to express our **strong support of House Bill 3970**, a critical piece of legislation that addresses one of the most urgent and persistent issues facing Oregon: **youth homelessness**.

House Bill 3970 provides a forward-looking, collaborative approach to supporting youth experiencing homelessness by directing the **Department of Human Services (DHS)** and the **Housing and Community Services Department (HCSD)** to develop recommendations for the biennial Governor's budget to **ensure sufficient funding is allocated to meet the needs of these vulnerable young people**.

By expanding eligibility for support through the **Emergency Housing Account** and establishing **dedicated grant programs for youth**, this bill takes an important step toward closing the gaps that currently leave far too many young Oregonians without shelter, stability, or hope for the future.

HB 3970 recognizes that youth homelessness requires **a specialized, coordinated response** and that we must **invest upstream** to prevent chronic homelessness and deepen support for service providers already doing this work:

- **Emphasis on interagency collaboration** to ensure funding recommendations are informed, strategic, and responsive to the lived realities of youth;
- **Modification of eligibility criteria** so that more young people in need are not excluded from support simply because they don't meet arbitrary thresholds; and
- **Creation of new grant programs** focused specifically on youth homelessness, ensuring dollars go directly to the services and supports that can make the difference between a future on the streets and a future full of opportunity.

House Bill 3970 is not just a policy—it's a statement of Oregon's values. It says that we will not look away when our children sleep in cars, shelters, or under bridges. It says that we will respond not with indifference or half-measures, but with **action, investment, and compassion**.

On behalf of Kairos Northwest, I urge you to vote **yes** on HB 3970 to advance this vital legislation without delay.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon's youth.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Harle
Executive Director
Kairos Northwest