

June 2, 2025



RE: Support for HB 3970

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

I am writing 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**. Every day, Parrott Creek serves youth who have lived on the streets and/or in unsafe environments. Every day, we help reverse the trauma caused by housing insecurity.

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. Failing to meet the needs of these young people directly leads to the adult homeless crisis we face.

HB 3970 recognizes that youth homelessness requires a specialized response, that we must invest preventatively, and that we must 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.

I urge you to vote **yes** on HB 3970 and to advance this vital legislation without delay.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Fulford", with a stylized flourish underneath.

Simon Fulford, Executive Director