



EMO Urges House Rules Committee Support of HB 3970

June 2, 2025

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

My name is Edward Buck-Shannon, and I am the Public Policy Associate at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. EMO is a state-wide association of faith groups with more than 750 member congregations. We serve thousands of Oregonians through our direct service programs including Second Home, a host home program where we help house youth experiencing homelessness.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults, in addition to the work of our member congregations and denominations around the state. The Legislature has made significant investments in services and support for youth experiencing homelessness during past Legislative Sessions but there is still so much work to be done.

EMO stands in full support of HB 3970. The YEHA program has seen incredible success in addressing homelessness in rural areas, especially in Southern Oregon. Organizations like the Maslow Project and FARA4Kids have used the funding to house families that had been camping in the woods and help build new shelter facilities. HB 3970 not only raises funding for YEHA but also expands eligibility considerably to include families with young children, the demographic most at risk of becoming homeless. This type of flexible funding is critical to addressing the varied, individual needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

HB 3970 also provides funding for behavioral health and substance use services for houseless youth through much-needed workforce training. Expertise in these areas is sorely lacking, and the in-house nature of this training will help formerly houseless youth make careers in social service.

The best way to address adult homelessness is by ending youth homelessness. It's time for Oregon to reaffirm our commitment to our youth. We appreciate your consideration and continued support.

Thank you,

Edward Buck-Shannon