



ST. MARY'S HOME FOR BOYS

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February 10, 2026
Written Testimony
of Francis Maher before the
House Committee on Behavioral Health

RE: Support for House Bill 4042

Chair Pham and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health:

St. Mary's Home for Boys respectfully submits this written testimony in strong support of House Bill 4042. As a child-caring agency serving youth with complex needs, we believe this legislation meaningfully strengthens Oregon's child welfare system by prioritizing safety, accountability, and trauma-informed care while preserving necessary placement flexibility for children who require specialized services.

HB 4042 establishes clearer and more consistent regulatory expectations for child-caring agencies and reinforces the Department of Human Services' ability to act decisively when children's health or safety is at risk. These provisions protect youth, support responsible providers, and help ensure that agencies committed to best practices are not undermined by inconsistent oversight or inadequate standards. We particularly support the bill's emphasis on transparency and corrective action that is focused solely on child safety.

The bill's updates to restraint and seclusion training requirements reflect current best practices in youth care. By prioritizing de-escalation, trauma-informed approaches, and portable, competency-based certification, HB 4042 promotes safer environments for both youth and staff while encouraging systems that reduce reliance on physical interventions. These reforms align with our long-standing commitment to evidence-based care and continuous staff development.

Finally, HB 4042's targeted placement exceptions recognize the realities faced by youth who need short-term stabilization, culturally appropriate services, or medically necessary treatment. These provisions give the system needed flexibility without weakening safeguards. For these reasons, St. Mary's Home for Boys urges the Legislature to pass House Bill 4042 and continue strengthening Oregon's commitment to the well-being of children in care.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Maher

Executive Director

St. Mary's Home for Boys

