



Testimony on HB 2232 A to

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

April 23rd 2015

Michael H. Balter, President Emeritus

Boys & Girls Aid

My name is Michael Balter; I am President Emeritus of Boys & Girls Aid and the Chair of the Affinity group for homeless and runaway youth for the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. Boys & Girls Aid has been serving homeless youth for the past 130 years. In the last 4 decades our efforts have been focused on Washington County.

I have highlighted the current statutory expectations for the Department of Human Services related to runaway and homeless youth. Much of this language was developed by the Alliance in HB 3260 adopted in the 2011 session.

ORS 417.799 Runaway and homeless youth; delivery of services; policies.

(1) The Department of Human Services **is responsible for coordinating statewide planning** for delivery of services to runaway and homeless youth and their families.

(2) The department **shall recommend policies that integrate a system of services and support** for runaway and homeless youth into the state's continuum of care for children who are 0 through 17 years of age. The department shall recommend policies for a system of services and support for youth who are 18 through 20 years of age and who continue to be or who become homeless.

(3) The department **may work** with the Youth Development Division, the Employment Department, the Housing and Community Services Department, the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, the Department of Education and the Oregon Youth Authority **to develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach for services and support** for runaway and homeless youth and their families, including youth who are 18 through 20 years of age and who continue to be or who become homeless.

(4) In addition to the entities listed in subsection (3) of this section, **the department shall include representatives of youth, nonprofit organizations and statewide coalitions** related to runaway and homeless youth services and supports, including services and supports for youth who are 18 through 20 years of age and who continue to be or who become homeless, in the joint process described in subsection (3) of this section.

(5) The department may enter into and renew contracts with providers for the provision of services to runaway and homeless youth and their families, including services to youth who are 18 through 20 years of age and who continue to be or who become homeless. [2005 c.495 §2; 2011 c.678 §2; 2012 c.37 §109; 2013 c.249 §§1,2; 2013 c.623 §11]

ORS 417.800 Department to coordinate efforts and make recommendations. The Department of Human Services **shall coordinate the collection of data, provision of technical assistance to communities for assessing the needs** of runaway and homeless youth, and **identification and promotion of the best practices** for service delivery, and **shall recommend long term goals to identify and address the underlying causes** of homelessness of youth. [2005 c.495 §3; 2011 c.678 §3]

Since the transfer of responsibility for these youth **in 2011 to The Department**, The Department has not produced results in any of the areas listed above other than some limited contracting over the past four years. Due to this there has been no focused statewide attention or advocacy for these children lead by the Department. The Department has not requested any new resources for these children even though a dramatic increase in need and visibility of the children has occurred over the past 4 years.

The attached examples of data collection and outcome reporting, funding strategies and current investments for homeless and runaway youth have been produced by the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs.

We are asking that language be added to the statue to require the Department to cooperate with groups like the Alliance to produce statewide plans, strategies and resource analysis similar to the examples attached to this testimony and to report results back to the legislature.