

Catholic Community Services

*We champion the positive development of children and adults,
strengthen families and build community.*

To:

Chair Nancy Nathanson
Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

Catholic Community Services (CCS) is a State-licensed and nationally accredited social service organization that provides several types of social services to more than 2,000 children, youth, and adults each year. We provide foster care, treatment foster care, and residential treatment for more than 100 children and youth on any given day in Marion, Polk and Yamhill County. This is less than ten percent of the foster children in these counties but we serve the children that don't thrive in regular foster care.

We are here today to ask for your support for SB 632. This important legislation improves foster care outcomes and reduces costs for Oregon taxpayers, but more importantly, it will help provide foster youth like the ones we serve with what they need most to heal and grow: safe, stable, nurturing homes.

SB 632 will set up two pilot programs through DHS, one urban and one rural. These programs will provide supports to foster parents ranging from trauma informed, culturally appropriate care training to 24/7 back-up and crisis respite care.

CCS has more than 15 years of experience providing enhanced supports for foster parents similar to those outlined in SB 632 and the results have been good. Enhanced support for foster parents prevents disrupted foster care placements and empowers the foster parent to be firm and compassionate at the same time.

For example, not long ago we accepted a 13 year old girl that had already been in 15 different foster homes. She refused to unpack her clothes on the day she arrived and the next morning she went out on the front porch and threw the foster mom's newspaper into the street. When the mom went to go get the paper the girl locked the mom out of her house, turned the stereo up as loud as it would go and refused to answer the door.

In situations like this it is difficult for a foster parent not to ask, "What's wrong with this girl?" Having been trained in trauma informed care however, we know the better questions are, "What happened to trigger this behavior, is everyone safe, and what do we want for the future? "

CCSwv.org

P.O. Box 20400, Salem, OR 97307 | 503-390-2600



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Seventy percent of the foster children cared for by foster parents receiving enhanced supports don't have any more disrupted placements, 70% of those children go on to enjoy success at school, and 40% of them end up transitioning out of foster care to a nurturing permanent home instead of aging out of foster care on their own. We promise the children that do "age out" of foster care with us that we will stand by them until they have emancipated successfully or at least until they are 26 years old. That means that if they are willing to obey the law they will have safe, nurturing place to live and a part time job to help pay for it.

Oregon's foster care system works well for most children but it does not work well for the children that linger in the system for years bouncing from one disrupted placement to another. There will probably always be disrupted foster care placements but our experience suggests 70% of them could be prevented by the kinds of enhanced supports described in Senate Bill 632.

Respectfully,


James T. Seymour
Executive Director
Catholic Community Services

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