



March 21, 2017

Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Re: Testimony Concerning SB 5526

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Steiner-Hayward and Representative Rayfield, and Committee Members:

I would like to introduce myself. I am the Executive Director of a nonprofit child-caring agency in Salem, Christian Community Placement Center (CCPC). We have been working with at-risk youth and their families in Oregon for the past 29 years. Our agency is located within the constituency of Committee Member Senator Jackie Winters. It is CCPC's desire to partner with you as we work through this year's legislative session and I would like to take a few minutes to share the work we do.

CCPC's mission is to provide a safe place where youth can heal from past trauma in their lives, recover from destructive behaviors (such as suicide attempts, self-harm, and addictions), develop skills that will assist them in graduating from high school, and prepare them for independent living and job readiness. CCPC works not only with the youth but also with their families. Our efforts include reunifying families whenever possible.

CCPC works with some of the most difficult to place youth in the State of Oregon. Our clients are referred by both Oregon Youth Authority and Department of Human Services. An example of the work we do is our on-site five bed residential program, Project 180. This program assists youth in stabilizing and diverting from being placed in a closed custody facility. Approximately 95% of the youth placed in our program have completed the program successfully and have avoided being committed to a correctional facility. A big factor in their success is that we intentionally keep the program small, and each youth has their own room. Although operating a small program that requires round-the-clock staffing often more than exhausts the resources we receive in reimbursement payments, CCPC remains committed to programs that enhance young people's success. It is critical that our BRS funding is appropriate for the services these youth need. A budget cut would force the closure of this program.

CCPC hopes to maintain all our current programs, since they are making an important difference in the lives of people. Consider the following testimonies from those we work with:

- From a parent: *"I wanted to thank you and your group of mentors for all the work and care you took for my son. He felt totally safe and supported by you. It was great to see his trust in you. I appreciate the extra miles you went, your advocacy for him, and your obvious care and connection. The support you provided to me that allowed me to keep him in my life and in his brother's life was amazing. Thank you for all you did and all the help you provided us as a family. You rock!"*

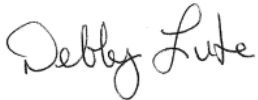
- From a youth: *“I turned my life around—it was hard, but I did it. You really helped me out and taught me things. You planted the seed for my success.”*
- From an Oregon Youth Authority Probation Officer: *“You all were great with my client and he did great there—better than at any of his previous placements.”*

I am writing to you on behalf of these youth and families. The State of Oregon, through its Behavioral Rehabilitation Comprehensive Systems Review Process, made determination that services to BRS youth and children, provided by providers such as CCPC, are underfunded by 30%. In response, the Governor’s budget recognizes this need for increased funding. It is critical that the proposed rates remain intact through the budgeting process. Considering this, I thank you in advance for any support you can provide at the legislative level.

I know this legislative session is busy for you but I would like to extend an invitation for any committee members to come and visit us and see our organization in action. These children have come so far and we can’t stop helping them now. Funding for their services is a major part of the support they need to continue to succeed. Being able to speak more directly and personally about CCPC’s work would be a privilege that I look forward to when your schedule allows.

We are grateful for the work you do on behalf of our state. If you need any further information about CCPC, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debby Lute".

Debby Lute
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