



OREGON  
*Alliance*  
of Children's Programs

5 April 2017

House Education Committee

SUPPORTING HB 3267-1

Dear Chair Dougherty, Vice-Chair Hernandez, and Committee Members,

The Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs represent \$235 million in services to children and families, and our members touch the lives of nearly 100,000 children each year.

We have 200 foster parents who provide special treatment services to nearly 300 children and youth in foster care each year.

We are the only advocacy organization of runaway and homeless youth providers in Oregon, representing 11 organizations. Attached is an infographic on homeless youth statistics for Oregon, produced by the Oregon Department of Education. This is their annual homeless school children count which reports 20,524 school aged children who were homeless in 2014-15. Focusing only on unaccompanied minors, who are most likely to be in high school, the count is for 3,232.

Attached to our testimony is the breakdown of how many homeless students are in your legislative school districts.

Another critical number for children is their ACES score. The national Adverse Childhood Experiences Study identified ten trauma-inducing events in a child's life. If you have had four of these events occur before age 18 years, you move into an arena of social ills such as no high school graduation, smoking, inappropriate personal and sexual relationships, suicide attempts and other damaging activities. You will then face chronic poor health in mid-life resulting in early death.

Attached to our testimony is our ACES study which was conducted by the Alliance, and looked at the 100,000 children our members care for.

- 84% of the children and youth in our foster care homes have a score of 4 or more events.
- Foster children have the highest ACE scores, averaging an 8.

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- 61% of youth who are runaway and homeless have a score of 4 or more events.
- Runaway and homeless youth have an average ACE score of 6.1.

It's amazing that these young people are surviving, much less prioritizing being in school. They are overcoming tremendous odds in order to continue their schooling.

My point here is that we should be honoring the efforts of these youth by doing everything we can to ensure that their valiant efforts are recognized. HB 3267 achieves this critical step by removing barriers which would deny them their well-earned high school diplomas.

Please support this bill.

Thank you,

Janet D Arenz, Executive Director

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