

BELLONI BRANCH

April 4, 2017

Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Vice-Chair
Representative Andy Olsen, Vice-Chair
Committee Members
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2903

Dear House Committee on Human Services and Housing;

On the beautiful southern coast of rural Oregon in Coos Bay, Bob Belloni Ranch operates as a private non-profit organization providing residential behavioral rehabilitation and community based independent living services for dependent and delinquent adolescents. Since 1971, Bob Belloni Ranch has transformed troubled youth into productive citizens through optimistic guidance, training, and opportunity within a safe, nurturing, and staff secure environment. That transformation hinges on safety and the therapeutic relationships that youth built with our staff.

Since last year's regulatory changes with SB1515, talented, experienced managers and lead staff have left employment. At the exit interviews, these critical staff chose to leave due to the:

- changes of the abuse and neglect definitions for providers,
- swift, severe response without due process of investigation and appeal, and
- the threat of being branded with a personal founded abuse or neglect allegation.

We are struggling to recruit immediately effective and experienced replacements.

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Belloni Shelter Care: (541) 269-2813
Independent Living Programs:
Coos County: (541) 267-3391
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Working with difficult children requires ongoing staff training, peer review, professional counseling and support to staff within a process of continuous quality improvement of job performance. HB 2903 strikes a critical balance that prioritizes the safety of children and provides due process of investigation within the sufficient former standard of abuse and neglect, and recognizes the process of professional growth of staff.

I'm writing in support of HB 2903 that focuses on three critical actions that will improve child safety outcomes:

- Increases strategies available to the DHS to address child safety and accountability.
- Creates prioritization, or triage, for the most concerning events.
- Builds greater competency for sustaining safe environments in provider organizations.”

Please hear and support HB 2903. We need these tools to reach safety goals as we continue to transform lives.

Sincerely,

Roger Langlie

Roger C. Langlie
Executive Director