



January 31, 2017

Senate Human Services Committee

Attn: Chair, Senator Gelser and Committee Members for Consideration in February 1, 2017 Hearing.  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St NE,  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Gelser, members of the committee:

Christian Community Placement Center (CCPC) is a non-profit youth services agency that has been in operation since 1989. Based out of Salem, Oregon, CCPC provides treatment foster care, mentoring services, residential services, and mental health counseling to our community's at risk children and families. The majority of the youth we have served over the past 27 years have been through Oregon's foster care system. We strongly believe in providing our foster youth with all of the services and support they need to be successful. Through loving foster parents, case management, counseling, educational services, and skill building our youth are able to thrive as individuals and successfully return to a lower level of care or transition into independent living. At CCPC, we are committed to community integration as well as partnering with families, schools, case workers, and churches to ensure the success of our youth. We emphasize age-appropriate personal accountability for our kids and encourage them to develop their talents and make positive contributions to society. The work we do is not easy, but seeing our kids succeed in life has been one of the most rewarding and gratifying opportunities we could have asked for.

During the past year, changes at the State level have created challenges with the OAAPI investigation process. It became apparent when CCPC was informed that the State was requiring 100% compliance in every area of Treatment Foster Care and any form of noncompliance was cause for revocation of our license. Even further, these cases of noncompliance was commonly judged as abuse and neglect. Many higher education employees have left the system out of fear that they, through human error and oversight, would be judged as an abuser of children. The financial impact of investigations and overarching fear has been a contributing factor in the closure of many programs and we at CCPC worry about who might be next. It has been my personal experience over the past 11 years that the system felt like a partnership. Providers were viewed as dedicated organizations and were considered part of the solution. There was support for transparency in identifying mistakes and needs for improvement at both the provider and state level in order to fulfill the mission to provide the best services for the youth and children entrusted to us. Unfortunately, the Provider community hit an unexpected wall this past year put up by the State, who seems to operate from a "guilty until proven innocent" standpoint. The State appears to commonly interpret mistakes and/or needs for improvement as "abuse and neglect" rather than opportunity for changing operation practices and providing additional training for staff and proctor parents.

I look forward to continuing conversation regarding how CCPC as a provider can partner with the State of Oregon in serving the needs of Oregon's Treatment Foster Care Youth. CCPC's mission statement leads us in the work we do to bring youth to a place where they believe they have a future and a hope, to the place where they can reintegrate into the community and have a prosperous and successful life.

Debby Lute  
Executive Director  
Christian Community Placement Center