



March 12, 2019

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard, and Members of the Committee,

RE: Support for SB 745, Expand Transition Services for Foster Youth

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin and I am the Legislative Director of Children First. Children First for Oregon strongly urges support of SB 745, to increase funding for the Independent Living Program (ILP) to better meet the needs of all foster youth aging out of care.

Children First represents the interests of Oregon's nearly 875,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. We work with our more than 110 partner organizations to identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children. SB 745 is one of four priorities on the 2019 Children's Agenda, and is actively supported by many of our partners.

Children First staff supports the Oregon Foster Youth Connection (OFYC), a statewide, youth led advocacy group of current and former foster youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Members shape every aspect of what OFYC is, how it is structured, which policies to focus on and what activities to participate in. I am honored to be one of OFYC's adult supporters and was very happy when they asked me to join them on this panel.

Before I pass it over to Nathaniel, I wanted to share a few data points to provide some context around the importance of ILP services in Oregon:

- 2,205 youth in care (21% of Oregon's foster care population) are 14 years of age or older.
- Just under half of eligible youth, approximately 1,300 youth, received ILP services in 2017.
- In 2016, according to [Fostering Youth Transitions](#), a data brief released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, nearly three in four foster youth ages 16 or older in Oregon transition out of care without being reunited or connected to a family, compared to about half of foster youth nationwide.

I also want to put it on the record so everyone is aware we will be working on with LPRO staff and Senator Gelser on an amendment. You will hear information about the age range for ILP and how OFYC would request that to be defined in a few minute. There also needs to be some changes to the specific elements of the data being requested from DHS in the report to



in order to align the request with how the ILP program functions and the availability and timing of data.

Thank you very much for your attention and service. Several of you are co-sponsors of the bill, and we appreciate your support and hope the rest of the committee will join you in supporting SB 745.

And now I will pass things over to Nathaniel.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director