

Good morning Chair, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brittany Ruiz and I am an advocate that helps the parents of underserved and minority populations to include families of color.

The majority of the families I work with are low income, Hispanic and African Americans.

Upon thorough review and seeing testimony from other parties, I support SB1605 with one request on clarification on temporary closing of cases.

I have not been able to clarify any input both in the bill and opinion by Senator Gelser that lays out exactly why we'd temporarily close a third party case and what impacts does this have on reunification if/ when DHS decides to reopen beyond the 60-90 day statutory time frame?

I would like to see this clarified in the bill and also make sure checks and balances are in place to protect minorities and families of color, which still remains the biggest disparity of removals for Oregon DHS, though I see progress in the right direction.

Otherwise, I agree with and support the legislation as written and appreciate Senator Gelser's work on tracking and monitoring out of state placements and putting more oversight and control over juvenile homes and facilities.

I also love that we are extending the college funding for aged-out foster youth housed out of state.

Thank you and I appreciate your time and reading my testimony!

Best regards,

Brittany Ruiz
Parental Rights Advocate

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