

Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner-Hayward, Co-Chair Rayfield, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults. I am a **McKinney-Vento homeless liaison** for the **Beaverton School District**. We are dedicated to **providing resources for and maintaining the educational rights of homeless youth**. I am **here today** to advocate for full funding for HB 2544, to provide and ensure a full continuum of services for Oregon's unaccompanied homeless youth. Youth who are not in the physical custody of their parents or guardians and who are homeless. In Beaverton School District alone, there were 303 unaccompanied homeless youth last school year.

Oregon ranks among the first in the nation for our houseless youth population while investing only \$2.5 million every biennium into services for this population.

HB2544 provides \$2.2M to support host home providers across Oregon, a model with a strong national reputation, for which Oregon is considered a leader. Host Homes provide youth with long-term housing supports as well as a stable home, family, and support system while they attend school. This bill also provides money to expand or enhance existing Unaccompanied Homeless Youth shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, mental health/substance use services, and other transitional housing options.

As a McKinney Vento, homeless liaison I have seen first hand the positive impact host homes have had on homeless youth. I currently have 4 students being housed in a host home. Last year while working exclusively with high schoolers, I had 72 homeless unaccompanied youth. 72 at one high school. Think about that for a minute.

In the United States, half of homeless adults first experienced houselessness as youth. We know that by investing in services for this population that we can **and will** deter lifetimes of housing instability and homelessness. Every child and young adult deserves to know they have access to stable support services that help them thrive. HB 2544 ensures that is a reality for our young Oregonians experiencing houselessness.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Niobe Kiethly  
Mc-Kinney-Vento Liaison  
Beaverton School District