



Royce Bowlin  
March 1, 2021  
House Human Services Committee  
Support of HB2340

Good Afternoon Chair Williams, Vice-Chairs Leif and Ruiz, and  
Members of the House Human Services Committee

For the record, my name is Royce Bowlin, I'm the Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance. The Oregon Alliance is non-profit dedicated to championing and advocating for the health and well-being of children, youth, families and communities across Oregon. Annually, our member organizations serve over 100,000 children, youth and families.

I'm here in support of HB2340 which provides stabilizing funds to the Independent Living Programs. Without it, Oregon Foster Youth transitioning out of Foster Care may lose access to essential services and supports that help them successfully transition into adulthood.

Each year, more than 20,000 youth age out of foster care and lose their safety nets overnight. Compared with their representation in the general population, African American and Native American are overrepresented in the child welfare system.



Youth who are transitioning to adulthood need to have well developed self-esteem and self-efficacy skills that equip them to manage relationships in multiple contexts, including education and employment settings, as well as with friends and family members.

Often, youth in the foster care system have lived through multiple traumas and disruptive events by the time they begin their transition to adulthood. This can include abuse and/or neglect, multiple foster home placements, lack of continuity in education, and an array of losses of relationships such as friends, family, and/or siblings.

Their life experiences can create additional problems resulting in mental illness, substance abuse problems, and a lack of confidence. These challenges impact the emotional and social development of foster care youth as they transition into adulthood.

These youths are in our care and are our responsibility. We must provide them with an opportunity to succeed. Without these funds these youths may become homeless, victimized, and lack the financial resources to access food or resources to pay for rent or utilities bills.

As the father of an adopted son who came from foster care, I know how important these skills and supports are and I ask for your support of HB2340!

Thank you for your continued commitment in ensuring youth aging out of foster care have access to high-quality supports and services so they too will have an opportunity to thrive and live their best lives.