

Submitter: Marisa Hayner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2599

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Marisa Hayner and I am the director of the Safe Families for Children movement in Lincoln County. This is a national movement, started in Chicago, in 2003, and is located in 40 states as well as 4 other countries around the world. Safe Families serves all of Lincoln County and works by mentoring and hosting vulnerable children and creates extended family-like supports for socially isolated families through a community of compassionate volunteers to keep children safe and ultimately with their families and out of the foster care system.

Here are some facts about SFFC:

- Screen and approve Host Families similar to foster care
- Closely monitor children in hosting homes
- Average stay is 44 days but is not limited to a minimum or maximum
- 70% of children hosted are 5 years old and below
- Age range is 0-24 years old
- Can include young parents with children

Program components:

- Host children in approved volunteer host homes
- Mentor and support at-risk youth and parents

Goals:

- Prevent child abuse
- Deflect children from foster care
- Family support and stabilization

Safe Families for Children is a non-profit, though Safe Families chapters run under operating agencies such as Lincoln County runs under Hearts With a Mission out of Medford, OR. While we have the support of this agency, we are responsible for raising our own funding. Passing HB2599 would save our Safe Families programs across Oregon thousands of dollars in our annual budget as we are required by the state for each of our volunteers working with children to have a federal background check. From 2019 to present our Oregon Collaborative spent over \$45,000 on background checks to vet over 650 volunteers.

On behalf of our Oregon Safe Families Collaborative consisting of 14 counties, passing HB2599 will support your local non-profits by allowing us to continue to offer

high demand services to our struggling families in Oregon.