



A Family For Every Child
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PROGRAMS

Heart Gallery
Child Recruitment
Adoption Agency
Matching Assistance Program
Mentor Program
Family Finding and Preservation
Family and Child Matching Events
Community Events
Host Homes
Life Books

Dear Representatives,

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults. As the Youth and Young Adult Onboarding and Resource Specialist at A Family For Every Child, I am dedicated to my goal of helping at risk/ homeless youth and to the end of youth homelessness in Lane County. I am writing to you to advocate for full funding for HB 2454 and HB 2456, to provide and ensure a full continuum of services for Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth, those who are not in the physical custody of their parents or guardians, and who are homeless.

I hope you will join me in affirming housing as a basic human right for all Oregonians, especially our youth. Oregon ranks among the first in the nation for our houseless youth population.

HB 2454 and HB 2456 provide \$6.25 M 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 support as well as a stable home, mentorship, and support system while they attend school. HB 2454 and HB 2456 also provide \$12.5 M to expand or enhance existing shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, mental health/substance use services, and other transitional housing options for houseless youth.

These bills will also dedicate funding to providing assistance to school-aged youth and families to prevent evictions or rapidly rehouse them if they do become houseless.

In the United States, half of homeless adults first experienced houselessness in their 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 have access to safe and stable support services that help them thrive.

HB 2454 and 2456 ensure that is a reality for our young Oregonians experiencing houselessness.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,
Mattias Smith