

February 14, 2023

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

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on HB 2454 and HB 2456. My name is Julia Weinand, and I am writing in support of these bills which would increase funding for youth experiencing houselessness.

Housing is a basic human right which all Oregonians should have access to, especially our youth. It saddens me to say that Oregon has one of the greatest houseless youth population rates in the nation. HB 2454 and HB 2456 are crucial in addressing the future of these youth and the future of our State.

These bills enable youth access to 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 financing 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 provide 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. By addressing houselessness in youth populations, we can influence the fate of their generation and more generations to come. Every child and young adult deserves to have access to safe, stable support services; HB 2454 and 2456 ensure that is a reality for our young Oregonians experiencing houselessness.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote YES on HB 2454 and HB 2465. I thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults, and I look forward to hearing your vote.

Sincerely,
Julia Weinand