

Representative Susan McLain

House District 29



RE: Support for House Bill 4084

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Hudson and Wright, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today as the Chief Sponsor of House Bill 4084 to encourage your support of the bill and of foster youth in our Education system in Oregon.

Foster youth face incredible challenges in their young lives, and this often translates to struggles in the classroom as well. For example, **the graduation rate** for foster youth in Oregon over the last 7 years ranges between **35-46%**. Only **5%** nationally **graduate from a 4-year college**, and **81%** of foster youth nationally who age out **experience food insecurity**.

Students in foster care face many systemic challenges that can prevent them from attaining educational stability. It is clear that our education systems, nationally and in Oregon, do not do enough to support foster youth academically and with wrap-around services. This bill is the first step to changing this reality in Oregon.

H.B. 4084 proposes a **2-year pilot program** designed to improve educational outcomes for foster youth and **produce data** to help develop best practices for a **future Statewide Education Plan for foster children**. We have three schools that are excited and ready to participate in the pilot: **McDaniels High School in Portland, Timber Ridge Middle School in Albany, and South Medford High School in Medford**.

These three schools will coordinate with Anthony's Circle to improve outcomes for foster youth. Anthony's Circle is an organization that is working to blend school-based programming with partner support to ensure the success of foster youth. **Anthony's Circle, working in partnership with Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI)**, will also collaborate with other local Coordinated Care Organizations and Behavioral Health providers and with foster families and ODHS caseworkers to ensure that foster youth receive the support and wrap-around services that they need to be successful. **SEI has a proven track record** of providing critical services to our youth by providing a holistic approach that recognizes the need for both educational support and other wrap around services.

The budget request for this pilot program is \$1 million, but the support that our foster youth will receive and the data and feedback we will gain about how best to support these students is invaluable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan McLain".

Representative Susan McLain