

March 21, 2025

House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

RE: House Bill 3835

Chair Hartman and Members of the Committee,

I would like to express my strong opposition to HB 3835.

As lawmakers, each of you took an oath of office to faithfully uphold the **United States Constitution**. As you are likely aware, under the **14th Amendment**, citizens of the nation are guaranteed equal protections – and as such, children are to be afforded the same basic rights and protections that apply to adults.

I believe that each of you Legislators accepted the responsibilities of your roles with the goal of helping Oregon, and its citizens. This bill, if passed, would not protect the most vulnerable citizens in the state – disabled youth. **HB 3835 would remove this Constitutional Right for Oregon's children** by giving free reign to adults in schools and other organizations to physically harm children without fear or worry of investigation.

Many times, Legislators go far and beyond to support the aging population to ensure their safety and well-being. Everyone agrees abuse of the elderly is wholly unacceptable. Likewise, our disabled youth need those protections! Because there are **scientifically proven, fact-based evidences of SAFER approaches for handling unsafe distressed behaviors** in youth that work, which do not include restraint and seclusions in most cases – **THESE are the approaches Oregon's Legislators should support**.

EVERYONE understands that there is a mental health and behavioral health crisis in our state -- there is also an overwhelming staffing shortage in the health care systems nationwide. And? **Taking away constitutional protections from youth is not the right approach for our sanctuary state**. There are other ways to grow our workforce than offering people jobs where school staff and health providers can abuse children without fear of any legal recourse. Oregon's grandparents, aunts, uncles, mothers, fathers, siblings and youth – all expect you to **make a decision based on the protections the Constitution affords all of its citizens**. In this case, asking you to vote NO on HB 3835 is the only right decision for Oregon's most vulnerable citizens. When it is your turn to vote, I would hope you will each ask yourself – “How can I, in good conscience, put Oregon's youth at further risk?” Since there are other safer approaches for providers and children – I implore you to vote no to this bill and recommend you dig into those safer alternatives... to keep Oregon's disabled citizens safe.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Roberta Lincoln

Parent with Lived Experience and Statewide Parent Advocate