

Submitter: Tom van der Veen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835

For nearly 28 years, I have had the honor of supporting children and young adults in a professional capacity. I am currently the Manager of Children's Care Licensing and Appeals at the Oregon Department of Human Services. Our team licenses Child Caring Agencies. We have successfully closed agencies with abusive and inappropriate practices and have stopped dangerous programs from opening. We also regulate successful Child Caring Agencies which continue to operate in Oregon. The statutes we rely on to regulate Child Caring Agencies are critically important for the safety of children served by these agencies. However, the law has several confusing expectations which have caused unintended consequences that House Bill 3835A -5 Amendment will correct.

The following are a few examples:

- Holding a child in care's hand to cross the street is considered a restraint.
- Not completing certain types of documentation correctly is a violation which constitutes abuse regardless of child safety or outcomes.
- Children in Child Welfare custody are prevented from accessing potentially lifesaving care if the care is located outside of Oregon.

These and other similar examples have caused Child Caring Agency staff to be fearful of substantiated findings of abuse. Child Caring Agency leadership have expressed concern regarding the current regulatory environment. Some have stopped operating because of these concerns.

We need appropriate regulations to hold Child Caring Agencies to a high standard. The children they serve deserve that protection. The regulations need to be reasonable and in the best interest of children. House Bill 3835A -5 Amendment addresses these concerns while maintaining a robust regulatory structure to hold Child Caring Agencies accountable. I support HB 3835.