



February 5, 2026

Re: Support for HB 4059

Dear Chair Hartman, Co-Chairs Scharf and Walters, and Committee Members:

For more than 50 years, Janus Youth Programs has served Oregon's most vulnerable young people, including those experiencing homelessness, exiting foster care and the juvenile justice system, and youth with significant behavioral health and trauma-related needs. We see firsthand how Oregon's current child welfare regulatory and enforcement system is not meeting the needs of the very children it is meant to protect.

Over the past decade, Oregon's capacity to serve high-acuity youth has collapsed. In 2014, 51 nonprofit providers were serving youth with the highest needs. By 2025, that number has dropped to seven. Janus has experienced the impact to this important workforce directly, and this has made it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain skilled and qualified staff to safely operate programs, and sustain services for youth who have nowhere else to go.

When programs close or reduce capacity, the consequences are immediate and severe. Youth end up cycling through emergency rooms, temporary lodging, homelessness, or worse. The programs most impacted by this system failure are those serving Black youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and Latinx youth. That is not equity. It is not compassionate. And it is not safe.

Caring, trained staff who are culturally-responsive and trauma informed - people that we desperately need - are increasingly reluctant to engage in these much needed fields due to the threat of investigation while acting in good faith under extraordinarily complex circumstances. This drives dedicated professionals out of the field and makes it nearly impossible to staff programs serving youth with the highest needs.

HB 4059 is a necessary and responsible step forward. By adopting the "preponderance of evidence" standard, Oregon would align with 32 other states and establish a fairer, more balanced approach that protects children while also ensuring due process for the workforce caring for them.

Kids with high-acuity needs can succeed when systems center youth needs and are built to support them. HB 4059 will help begin rebuilding a system that values safety, accountability, and compassion—for youth and the professionals who serve them.

I urge your support of HB 4059.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carmen Rubio".

Carmen Rubio
Executive Director