

**RE: HB 4042 – Oppose**

**Senate Human Services Committee**

**Hearing: Tuesday, February 24, 2026**

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Milo Coine, and I live in Salem, Oregon. I am submitting testimony in **opposition** to **HB 4042** because it removes vital protections for children in congregate care and allows for less accountability from the agencies explicitly designed to protect children. The current precedent of care exists because of past flaws in the system that led to children being harmed, and if this bill is passed, it will regress those very important steps forward.

Speaking from experience, **family-based care** should be a top priority in protecting children. At the age of 16, I was placed in congregate care by my mother at the Academy at Sisters in Bend, Oregon, and stayed for eight months. I was sent there because I was suffering from depression and anxiety, abuse from my mother, and academic decline as a consequence. Every day that I was at that boarding school, I was unbearably homesick, and desperately wished to just see a family therapist at home, or to move to my dad's house instead. I wasn't allowed to speak to my friends or most of my family at home, and I felt isolated on a level that can't be explained easily to someone that hasn't experienced it. The children sent away to these places are often made out to be unruly, manipulative, or even sociopathic, when the truth is that they are terrified, unheard, and in desperate need of love and true connection. When children are removed from their families, they very often lose that stability and support, and it's extremely difficult for them to build that trust again.

I can also attest that **restraint and seclusion** are deeply traumatizing, especially to children. While I'm fortunate to have never experienced physical restraint in one of these programs, I spent at least two weeks in a form of solitary confinement during my time at the Academy at Sisters. I was never physically isolated during that time, but I was not allowed to speak to or look at anyone for any reason, especially other students, for a minimum of two weeks. I don't remember all of my time in boarding school, but I do very clearly remember how I felt in that level of seclusion. Even as an introverted person, I started to have daily panic attacks and fits of anger, and I am still unravelling the nightmares and deep-seated dissociation that a mere two weeks of solitary confinement gave me. March 2nd will mark 11 years since I first stepped foot on that campus, and I still am unlearning the harm that seclusion did to me. There is no instance in which seclusion will benefit a child's mental or emotional health, and I strongly oppose any notion otherwise.

I strongly believe that Oregon should be centering children, families, and survivors in these policy decisions and conversations. Abuse can only continue in these facilities when there is a lack of

accountability in the system and loopholes to avoid it; if Oregon wants to truly protect the children in our state, we cannot allow these loopholes to be widened.

For this reason, I urge you to **vote NO on HB 4042**.

Thank you for your time and commitment to protecting the children of Oregon.

Respectfully,

Milo Coine

Salem, Oregon

Survivor of the Academy at Sisters, 2015