

Written Testimony regarding House Bill 3644 from St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County:

Hello, my name is Jack Boisen and I am the Director of Operations for St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County (SVdP). We provide homeless services and operate a variety of shelters throughout the county, which serve a combined 800 individuals a day. Many of the programs we run receive State funding, and we are thankful for the opportunity to provide essential help, care and shelter to vulnerable community members due to the State's investment into the care for Oregonians. The following is a broad highlight of some of the programs we run with support from State funding.

First, the 410 Garfield Safe Sleep Site. In 2022, it began as the primary transition site for the largest unmonitored homeless encampment in Eugene. Three years later it is now one of the most effective programs in the state, with strong numbers of exits into permanent housing. With the support of staff from the City and SVdP, this program has grown into a calm, trauma-informed shelter where, on average, about 40% of the 92 clients sheltered there are employed and moving toward housing. Our current housing rate out of 410 is 37% percent, with 46 people becoming housed out of that program Since October, and another 8% exiting to long term positive outcomes such as assisted living, placing our positive exit rate over 45%. The privacy and peace provided there is a healthy fit for individuals seeking employment, finishing ongoing education, and working hard to move out of the brutal cycle of homelessness.

Adjacent to 410, is another Safe Sleep Site at 310 which provides a safe parking place for RVs and vehicles. The 310 Garfield Safe Parking program has been one of the few sites in Eugene where unhoused individuals living out of their vehicles can safely be sheltered. This situation is a growing percentage of our local unhoused population. We've all seen the vehicles around town, and while 310 Garfield can't hold all of them, it's a unique program in this community for taking vehicles that would otherwise be camped in the street. There are many barriers around living out of a vehicle. Many RV camps have restrictions on cleanliness of the vehicle, age of the vehicle, require up to date insurance and tags, as well as drivability. So if you are an impoverished individual living out of your RV, there are barriers to staying in most RV parks. We've built this program, with the amazing support from the City and on land generously allowed by LTD, to bridge the unique needs of individuals living out of vehicles on the streets in our communities with achieving positive, housing focused outcomes. We have operated 310 Garfield as a trauma informed program since its beginning, and recently have implemented a time limit on stays in the program. This has increased housing numbers of the program rapidly in the past few months. Vehicle programs are very hard to find widespread funding for, which is why there are not more programs to help this increasing population of the homeless. The Safe Parking program's continued success

and increasing housing numbers can continue to be the local option to assist that sizeable portion of our unhoused neighbors who own and live out of their vehicles, to move into long-term housing options.

Next, our Dawn to Dawn site is the lowest barrier shelter in Lane County, set up to be a communal shelter for anyone who may not be eligible for another shelter in the community. It is the one local program that offers same-day beds, and we provide each guest with their own personal storage with a lock. The primary goal of this program is to provide respite, stability, and an open door to help individuals get off the street. Many times, this program is used as a launching pad, where a client will gain stability and then exit into a better situation, whether that is rehab, another shelter program in the community such as a non-congregate shelter, or housing. The most important piece of information tied to this shelter is that even with it being the lowest barrier possible, and same day beds for people right off the street, we continue to house individuals through this program. Additionally, we offer multiple beds at this site to law enforcement and mental health professionals to drop off individuals as an alternative to jail, to de-escalate or sober up.

Last, but not least, I'll highlight our First Place Annex, a night shelter for homeless families. This vital program in our community, is the largest of only 3 overnight family shelters, and the only one that does not define family as either a mother, father and children, or a single mother with children. We allow families to define themselves, as long as there is an adult and child. This means we are the one shelter available for single fathers with children, LGTBQ+ couples with children, and multi-generational caretakers of children. Eugene has one of the highest national homelessness rates, so this is a vital, unique need. So far this year we have served 78 families (262 individuals), with 28 of those families exiting into their own permanent housing, and 41% exiting into positive living situations.

All our programs engage clients actively with case management, and we work very closely with both the city of Eugene and Lane County teams to provide folks with the best possible outcomes. We believe whole-heartedly in the importance of data and housing-focused shelter. Thank you all for your support, and for caring for vulnerable Oregonians by supporting programs like these. The County and City teams have been a joy to work with, and with continued funding, we at St. Vincent de Paul are committed to continue working diligently to move folks out of poverty and into community. Thank you!