

**Emerson Levy**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
House District 53



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 25, 2025

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing with my strong support for HB 3079, a bill that addresses our youth homelessness crisis here in the state of Oregon. Central Oregon has some of the highest rates of unsheltered youth in the country, and this legislation will provide both immediate relief to youth facing homelessness, while also helping create the needed infrastructure to support them in the long term.

This legislation includes targeted appropriations for youth homelessness programs, an Emergency Certified Provider Grant Program, and addresses our youth behavioral health workforce needs. There is a growing demand for these services, and the programs in this bill will ensure we are meeting the moment and addressing the unique needs of our homeless youth across Oregon.

The bill addresses two key gaps that the incredible organization in my region, J Bar J, has pointed out are missing: substance use treatment resources, and a workforce program that works for small nonprofits. Both are innovative approaches that work. All local and national data indicates that we have much better success in steering youth back onto the path for success at 15 years of age, than we do with adults at 35 years of age.

I'd like to share an example local to my district. On a recent cold winter day, a 17-year-old contacted J Bar J. She was living in her car with her two-month-old daughter. They had no safe homes to go to and no family to help. Shortly after reaching out, this young lady and her baby were able to get to J Bar J's shelter, enter a safe living situation, connect with a case manager, and have all necessary resources available to her and her daughter. The support that J Bar J provides is critical to stabilizing her situation, but much more needs to happen for her to find longer term safety, independence, and success. With J Bar J, she'll have access to educational support, scholarships to cover schooling, housing subsidies, independent living support, and much more. Most importantly she has a group of caring professionals who believe in her potential and are paying attention to her and her daughter's needs.

Everyone deserves the chance to thrive, and that starts with a safe environment to live. These programs are 85% successful, meaning that 85% of the youth who get into one of these programs avoids homelessness as an adult. That's a remarkable rate of success.

I urge you to support this compassionate and common-sense bill.

*Emerson Levy*

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