



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

February 1, 2022

House Committee on Human Services
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 4013

Dear Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Ruiz, Vice-Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is advancing equitable policymaking and whole-child advocacy statewide to ensure our children and youth have what they need, regardless of their race or where they live, to thrive by activating meaningful change for children and families. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We collect, analyze, and elevate data and research that, alongside lived experience, drives conversations in support of Oregon's future. We partner alongside ~120 organizations through The Children's Agenda to uplift and advocate for community-driven, equity-centered policies and investments that will improve the lives of Oregon's children and families.

A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need. Every Oregonian should have access to a safe, stable, affordable place to call home, particularly children and families. Today, Oregon has the highest rate of youth houselessness in the U.S.¹ We must expand Oregon's commitment to houseless youth.

Investing and expanding services for houseless youth through HB 4013 is part of the 2022 Children's Agenda and is supported by many of our partners.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, Oregon was already experiencing a housing crisis, and too many of our neighbors and community members were experiencing housing instability. In the 2019-20 school year, over 21,000 kids experienced homelessness at some point during the year, with their families.² Black youth, in particular, are 2.67 more likely to experience homelessness. Due to COVID and the early closure of schools, we know this is likely an undercount.

Oregon must expand services for houseless youth by providing culturally-specific, trauma-informed housing and wraparound services for K-12 houseless youth. We urge your support of HB 4013. Thank you for your

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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¹ WalletHub; <https://bit.ly/30EbyCr>

² <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

time and consideration.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Ivy Major-McDowall, Policy and Advocacy Manager

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2022 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2022-childrens-agenda