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February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### **Testimony in Support of HB 3079**

Submitted By: Kendra Phillips  
Executive Director, Jackson Street Youth Services

My name is Kendra Phillips, and I serve as the Executive Director of Jackson Street Youth Services, a nonprofit dedicated to serving youth experiencing homelessness in Linn and Benton County. I am writing today in strong support of HB 3079, which would allocate desperately needed resources to youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon.

At Jackson Street Youth Services, we see firsthand the urgent need for youth-specific housing and services. Oregon's youth homelessness crisis is growing, yet youth remain chronically underfunded in state-level housing and homelessness investments. Currently, youth-specific services receive only a fraction of the funding directed toward adult homelessness programs, despite research showing that **intervening early is the most effective way to break a cycle of homelessness**.

The impact of HB 3079 on Youth-Serving Organizations:

1. **Increased Capacity to Meet Demand:** Our organization, like many others across Oregon, operates at or beyond our capacity. Additional funding would allow us to **expand shelter beds, provide long-term housing support, and enhance wraparound services**, including mental health care, job training, and education assistance.
2. **Stronger Pathways to Stability:** Stable housing is fundamental to a young person's ability to complete their education, secure employment, and transition to independence. Directing 30% of ODHS and OHCS housing and homelessness budgets to youth would ensure **consistent funding for age-appropriate, developmentally responsive services** that help young people build stable futures.
3. **Support for Pregnant and Parenting Youth:** Expanding eligibility for services to include individuals who are pregnant is a critical step forward. Young parents experiencing homelessness face unique barriers, and without targeted interventions, their children are at risk of entering the same cycle of instability. This bill would allow us to **better support young families**, providing housing, parenting resources, and case management.



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4. **Equity and Long-Term Cost Savings:** Investing in youth is not just the right thing to do—it is the smart thing to do. Without early intervention, youth experiencing homelessness are far more likely to become chronically homeless adults, increasing long-term costs to the state in emergency services, healthcare, and criminal justice. **By prioritizing youth now, Oregon can reduce overall homelessness and the associated social and economic burdens.**

HB 3079 represents a long-overdue commitment to Oregon's most vulnerable young people. I urge you to pass this bill and ensure that youth experiencing homelessness receive the resources they need to **survive today and thrive tomorrow**. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to addressing youth homelessness in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kendra Phillips".

Kendra Phillips  
Jackson Street Youth Services