

March 11th, 2025



Senate Committee on Human Services
Oregon State Capitol: 900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97302
Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1066

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 1066, which makes permanent the exception for adult foster homes from state building code requirements to install automatic sprinkler systems. My name is Rachel Hansen, and I am a Political Strategist at SEIU 503. Our union represents Medicaid-paid Adult Foster Home (AFH) providers serving five or fewer residents in the home. AFH play a critical role in Oregon's care continuum because unlike larger institutional settings – AFH offer a single-family residence to assist individuals with daily living activities, such as eating, bathing, mobility, and housekeeping.

AFH serve individuals across the care spectrum, including seniors, people with intellectual or developmental disabilities and mental health diagnoses. Ensuring that residents and providers are safe is a top priority for our members. It is also important to make sure that safety requirements are practical and reasonable for providers to implement. For years, the legislature has had to extend exemptions from sprinkler requirements because existing rules simply haven't made sense for adult foster homes. We have appreciated the ongoing conversation about this topic as stakeholders have attempted to find a solution and believe that SB 1066 is the right path forward.

Oregon Fire Codes already ensure that adult foster homes abide by strict health and safety regulations, including the requirement to:

- Demonstrate the ability to evacuate all residents within 3 minutes,
- Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in all required areas,
- Provide clear and unobstructed emergency exits, and
- Conduct regular fire drills and maintain evacuation records.

These measures prioritize resident safety while recognizing the unique, home-like nature of adult foster care settings. In the event a home cannot meet the evacuation standard, sprinkler system installation would then be required. This balanced approach ensures safety while acknowledging the unique needs of adult foster homes.

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Additionally, the cost of installing sprinkler systems after a home is already built is estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars—a financial burden that many of our members simply cannot afford. These are small providers operating in residential settings, and they are already struggling with rising operational costs. Forcing them to install sprinklers would risk closure for many homes and discourage new homes from opening, leaving vulnerable adults without the care and support they rely on.

Adult foster homes are more than just care facilities—they are homes. They provide a sense of community, dignity, and personalized care for residents who often have nowhere else to turn. Senate Bill 1066 helps to preserve these vital homes and ensure that Oregon's most vulnerable adults continue to receive the care they need in a safe and supportive environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 1066 to support adult foster home providers, their residents, and the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hansen
Political Strategist, SEIU 503

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