



SECOND HOME

A program of EMOregon

February 12, 2025

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

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Oregon's children, youth, and young adults. My name is Jenny Hale and I am the Director of the Second Home program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. I am writing today to advocate in support of HB 3079, ensuring a full continuum of services for Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth, those who are not in the physical custody of their parents or guardians, and who are homeless.

Second Home is a host home program that was launched in September 2010. Our mission is to provide stable, long-term housing for high school students, so that they can attend school, graduate, and pursue their goals. We have seen, on average, a ninety to ninety-five percent annual graduation rate among the students with whom we work. The host home model is a multi-layered housing option for youth that has seen much success. It is also a model for which students are asking.

I hope you will join me in affirming housing as a basic human right for all Oregonians, especially our youth. Oregon has the 4th highest number of houseless youth in the nation.

HB 3079 provides funding support for homeless youth services across Oregon through the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP). The host home model, a model with a strong national reputation, for which Oregon is considered a leader, is one youth housing model funded through YEHP. This Program provides youth with long-term housing support as well as a stable home, mentorship, and support system while they attend school. This legislation also provides financing to expand or enhance existing shelter facilities, outreach, culturally specific services, mental health/substance use services, and other transitional housing options for houseless youth. These bills will also dedicate funding to providing assistance to school-aged youth and families to prevent evictions or rapidly rehouse them if they do become houseless.



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In the United States, half of homeless adults first experienced houselessness in their youth. We know that by investing in services for this population that we can and will deter lifetimes of housing instability and homelessness. Every child and young adult deserves to have access to safe and stable support services that help them thrive. HB 3079 ensures this reality for our young Oregonians experiencing homelessness.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.



Jennifer Hale

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