



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair
Representative Ron Noble, Vice Chair
Representative Anna Williams, Vice Chair
900 Court St. NE, Rm. 140A
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 4112

Dear Representatives,

The Yamhill County Board of Commissioners supports HB 4112, to increase statewide funding for children's advocacy centers by \$3,000,000. There are more than 20 centers across the state of Oregon, serving all 36 counties by providing services like medical exams and forensic interviews, as well as prevention services, follow-up family services and therapy for children who have been victimized. Children's Advocacy Centers work in close collaboration with law enforcement, Department of Human Services (DHS), Child Protective Services (CPS), district attorneys, schools, and other community partners.

DHS and CPS caseworkers rely on these center's to be a critical resource in assisting them through the medical exam and forensic interview process, highly specialized staff at centers collaborate with caseworkers to determine when abuse is happening and work together to protect children. Without these resources, caseworkers are left to make these determinations on their own.

In 2019, the Oregon Legislature addressed the broken child welfare system by adding 300 caseworkers. As a result, several centers reported reaching their total 2018 caseload numbers by August of 2019. However, without the centers, caseworkers would be obligated to take children to police stations or emergency departments to recount and relive their trauma, diminishing the quality of evidence and lessening a family's ability to achieve justice.

Children's Advocacy Centers provide continuous statutorily mandated services which are widely recognized as best practices, collaborating with both community and law enforcement agencies, yet only receive 17% in state funding. Increasing their budgets to 28% by adding \$3,000,000 into statewide funding of these vital programs would support Oregon's state child welfare program and continued access to these critical services.

Thank you for your support of HB 4112 in the 2020 Legislative Session.

Respectfully,


Casey Kulla
Chair

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Mary Starrett
Vice Chair


Richard L. "Rick" Olson
Commissioner

Accepted by Yamhill County
Board of Commissioners on
1/30/20 by Board Order
20-34