



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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Oregon House Votes to Invest Over \$3.6 Million in Services for Unaccompanied and Unhoused Youth

HB 2544 provides funds for community organizations working to provide youth with resources and access to shelter, culturally-responsive services, mental health and substance use support, tutoring and nutrition services that will help youth earn a diploma.

SALEM, OR – The Oregon legislature voted today to invest \$3.6 million in state funds to support unaccompanied and unhoused youth services. [House Bill 2544](#), which passed unanimously, creates two programs through the Department of Human Services (DHS) that will help fund community organizations providing unaccompanied and unhoused youth with resources and access to shelter, culturally-responsive services, mental health and substance use support, tutoring and nutrition services that will help youth earn a diploma.

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Oregon currently has the fifth highest population of unhoused youth in the country behind California, Washington, Texas, and Florida.

“This is an issue for the entire state of Oregon,” said House Majority Leader [Rep. Barbara Smith Warner](#) (D-NE Portland), one of the bill’s chief sponsors. “The time to act is now. After hearing testimony from young Oregonians who have themselves experienced houselessness, as well as caseworkers and organizations on the ground, we know this cannot wait.”

“We can clearly see who is being impacted disproportionately by youth houselessness,” said [Rep. Wlnsvey Campos](#) (D- Aloha), one of the bill’s co-sponsors and caseworker. “Young girls, people of color, and people who identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community are at a greater risk of being unaccompanied and unhoused youths. HB 2544 will provide young folks with the resources they need to transition into a more stable living arrangement.”

Per the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), unaccompanied unhoused youth are ten percent more likely to identify as women or girls compared to unhoused adults. Additionally, a quarter of unaccompanied and houseless youth identified as Latino, compared with 20 percent of all homeless individuals. Unaccompanied houseless minors who identify as transgender also comprise four percent of the unaccompanied youth population, compared to just one percent of the individual population experiencing homelessness.

HB 2544 passed now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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