



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

July 1, 2019

Re: VOTE EXPLANATION ON HB 5050

To the Chief Clerk:

I voted AYE on HB 5050 due to the many excellent initiatives in it, including:

- Funding and increased bonding capacity for affordable housing, like LIFT, Permanent Supportive Housing and Housing Stabilization Program
- \$2 mil for Hacienda CDC "Las Adelinas" Housing Project
- \$300K to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon runaway youth
- \$1.5 mil to a mental and behavioral health pilot project
- \$6 mil for community mental health programs
- \$43 mil for the One Integrated Eligibility and Medicaid eligibility

**HOWEVER**, there are many items in this bill that I believe do NOT serve the public good as much as our House Committee on Human Services and Housing advocated strongly for I question how funding \$5.4 million for the Oregon State Fair (OSF, which was privatized in part to reduce state funding dependency) + \$3 million for OSF Horse Barn+ \$2 mil for OSF Poultry Barn, are in the best interests of the State. Not to mention \$.5 million to the Oregon Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, \$15 million to Eugene YMCA, and \$5 million Columbia Willamette Beaverton Hoop YMCA.

I struggle to believe that these expenditures provide as much "public good" as HB 3180, SB 745, HB 2627, HB 2639 and HB 2258, which addressed Oregon's public health crisis in child abuse, child welfare, and addictions, respectively. I recognize these bills did not make it out of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

**Child Abuse Omnibus bill**

The House Committee on Human Services and Housing gave its *highest ranking* of all bills with fiscals scored to what is known as the Child Abuse Omnibus Bill. This bill is the combination of two additional measures that also did not move out of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. They contained three appropriations (\$6 million for Child Abuse Intervention Centers, \$1 million for Oregon Child Abuse Prevalence Study, and HB 3180 \$100K for Implementation of Erin's Law, totaling \$7.1 million/biennium.

This trio of bills emerged from a bipartisan, bicameral workgroup which met monthly from July 2018 through January 2019 to examine the gaps in our child abuse system. We examined the many good bills being developed last summer and fall, such as the behavioral health components of the Student



Success bill, new requirements for TSPC, and violence prevention. The concepts developed by our workgroup would *fill remaining gaps*.

We sent Ways & Means *173 letters* (just a portion of the over 200 letters sent directly to people's individual legislators) *in support of \$7.1 million* from the Criminal Fines Account (CFA) or General Fund. This investment would save heartache and millions of dollars in future decades by reducing mental health and addictions, lost productivity, and the myriad of consequences that result from childhood trauma.

### **Independent Living Program for older foster youth**

The bill relating to transition services was not voted out of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. This bill would have expanded the age range of foster youth from the current 16-21 to 14-23 and would have provided more monthly cash assistance, housing assistance, and other support services as they enter adulthood without parental support. As in the 4 past biennia, this was the top priority of foster youth who gathered for a multi-day workshop held in the summer before the long session. In all past years, their bills have passed with unanimous or near unanimous support. This is the first year their bill failed. Many of my committee members agreed that not only are these investments so important for this population, but that *we should listen to what they say they most need*. The foster youth reduced their request from \$8.4 million to \$4 million sacrificing the supports for the older youth to extend service to youth starting at age 14. The older foster youth and those already aged out recognized for themselves that they would have been better served if they had the support of ILP services when they were younger rather than older, but it still failed.

### **Rural Alcohol and Drug Recovery Centers**

The bill relating to peer support for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders was not voted out of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. This bill would require OHA to fund and site Alcohol and Drug Recovery Centers in rural parts of the state to support Oregonians in early recovery. Our foster care system is struggling under the weight of overwhelming caseloads. Case workers cannot be hired or trained fast enough to replace those who are leaving due to unmanageable workloads. We must work to stem the tide of entry in to the foster care system. The Department of Human Services is clear that the majority of children in the system are there because of addictions. If we do not support families to recover from addictions particularly in the rural areas where resources are the most limited, we will never reduce the numbers of children in our system.

Every child who enters the child welfare system is traumatized not only by what they have experienced, but by the state's intervention. We must work harder to keep children in their homes by supporting parents to access recovery resources.

### **Women Infant and Children (WIC) 2K**

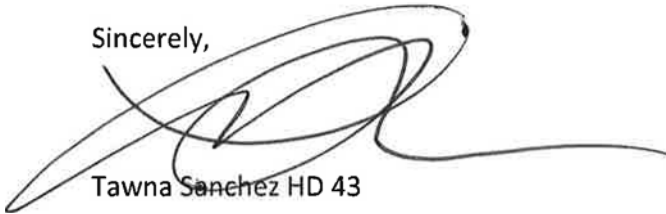
The bill relating to nutrition assistance for low income families was not voted out of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. This bill would have continued the Federal WIC food supplemental program to young Oregonians through age 5 or until they enter kindergarten. Currently the federal WIC program stops at age 5. If a child turns 5 after the cut off age to enter

kindergarten in September, they no longer have access to additional nutrition services until they enter kindergarten the following year. We know that good nutrition is a building block to a good education, leaving some children upwards of a year without those additional resources can be detrimental to their capacity to enter school ready to learn and thrive.

**Family Dependency Treatment Court**

As mentioned before, with regard to the bill relating to peer support for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders, I believe it is crucial that we stem the flow of kids into foster care by providing more treatment for behavioral health and addictions. This bill, requiring nearly \$15 million in General Fund, would have set up pilots in certain counties to send parents to treatment as opposed to jail. Very often when a parent goes to jail their kids are removed from them and placed in foster care. Treatment and recovery supports are vital to reducing the numbers of children in foster care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tawna Sanchez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tawna Sanchez HD 43