

**State Representative
Duane Stark
House District 4**



**State Senator
Sara Gelser
Senate District 8**

News Release: February 26, 2016

Contact:
Dawn Phillips: 503.750.1764

Governor's Child Foster Care Commission Bill Passes Oregon Senate

(Salem) "This new Governor's Child Foster Care Commission will hopefully be a permanent home where foster parents can go talk about what's going on in the foster care system in Oregon," said [State Senator Chip Shields](#) (D-Portland) today after the Senate adopted [House Bill 4080](#) by a vote of 24-0. "I'm especially excited to see that foster parents and foster children could be serving on this new commission."

[State Senator Sara Gelser](#) (D-Corvallis/Albany), one of the Co-Chief Sponsors for [HB 4080](#) explained, "this commission will add more oversight and accountability for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to ensure they are taking action against bad actors in our foster care system and doing everything possible to protect the children entrusted to the state's care."

The other Co-Chief Sponsor is [State Representative Duane Stark](#) (R-Grants Pass). "Instead of waiting until the next headline covering a horrible story about a child in foster care and a new task force being set up, hopefully this commission can get out ahead of problems before they happen," said Representative Stark. "Perhaps the commission can offer ongoing resources for the Governor, DHS, and legislators as well."

According to the [most recent figures](#) from DHS more than 11,000 children spent at least one day in foster care during 2014 and on average there were over 7,500 kids in foster care on any given day that year.

"The Governor's Commission on Foster Care will provide a means for the state to analyze systemic issues within the foster care system and recommend improvements that will benefit the children and families served," Kari Rieck, President-elect of the Oregon Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Network.

"By including youth who have lived in Oregon's Foster Care system, this new Governor's Commission will have the experience necessary to make the much-needed improvements for thousands of youth in Oregon's Care," said Tonia Hunt Executive Director of Children First for Oregon.

Senator Shields is a board member for the Oregon Foster Parents Association. Senator Shields, Representative Stark and the Association joined forces, to host a series of foster care town halls around the state last fall. Several foster parents expressed a need for a central state committee to bring their concerns and suggestions.

[HB 4080](#) now moves to Governor Kate Brown's desk for her consideration.

###