



March 13, 2019

Chair Keny Guyer

Vice Chair Noble

House Committee on Housing and Human Services, Members

My name is Kim McDonald, and I am the Executive Director of Mt. Emily Safe Center, a Child Abuse Intervention Center. Our Center is located in La Grande, OR and we provide services to children and families in Union, Baker, Grant, Morrow, and Wallowa County. I am asking on behalf of all the children we serve in our communities and those who are served by other Center's throughout Oregon for your support of HB 3178.

Receiving this funding would allow us to build the capacity of our organization and enable us to provide services to more children and families in our communities. Inadequate funding means some children will not receive these services or will be forced to wait when immediate care would be much better. Investing in CAICs saves money because early intervention and healing of trauma can prevent poor outcomes tied to adverse childhood experiences.

When children are unable to access CAICs, they are often instead seen at the emergency room or local clinic. They may have to go to the police station, Department of Human Services, or other agencies, interacting with multiple people and discussing the details of their abuse on many different occasions and a variety of settings which is more traumatic for both the kids and their families. Inability to access a CAIC also means they don't have access to the wrap-around follow up and therapeutic healing services that a CAIC's offers.

Ultimately, passing HB 3178 will make a huge difference in the lives of children in our community. Importantly, state investment will move us closer to an Oregon where all children regardless of their ability to pay or where they live, will be able to access to the holistic services provided by experts in the field in the child-friendly, safe and neutral locations that CAIC's offer.

We know that without intervention, children experiencing ongoing and repeated trauma are more likely to experience housing instability, adverse health outcomes, and physical and mental health symptoms.

With CAIC intervention, we hope to reduce unnecessary trauma experienced by children and to provide opportunities for children to heal from their abuse. We know we are making a huge difference, and urge your support of HB 3178 to even further increase our impact.

We hope for your support in our vision that every child in Oregon has the opportunity for expert, child-focused care when there are concerns of abuse.

Sincerely,

Kim McDonald

Executive Director