



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

June 24, 2025

The Honorable Rob Wagner
President of the Senate
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

The Honorable Julie Fahey
Speaker of the House
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 3795

Dear President Wagner and Speaker Fahey:

After careful consideration, pursuant to Article V, Section 15, I am returning Enrolled House Bill 3795 without my signature.

House Bill 3795 directs the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to submit an annual report on tax preparation services available to low-income Oregonians. ODHS produced a 2024 annual report on the new program, therefore this bill is codifying an existing report as an ongoing statutory requirement. I support Representative Hartman's intent to elevate the importance of equitable access to financial tools and support for low-income families. This bill is not needed to ensure legislators are receiving this information. ODHS will continue to produce an annual report on the program.

I am also returning the bill because of my concern regarding a late-stage amendment to the base bill that altered the criteria for when the agency must initiate a Child Incident Review Team (CIRT). CIRTs are integral to maintaining the highest standard of child safety for those under the supervision or care of ODHS. Changes to the CIRT process must be subject to a high level of public discussion, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis because there are implications for family privacy, resource allocation, and agency discretion in child welfare decision-making. The final bill does not meet this standard, and while I understand the intent, the real impacts of the legislation warrant greater discussion.

The intent of the amendment was to expand the criteria for when a CIRT must be initiated. However, the change does not provide ODHS the ability to suspend a CIRT if a report of abuse is ultimately determined not to be abuse. Expanding the criteria would have real impacts:

- More families who have lost a child will be subject to publicly posted reports on cases where no abuse occurred, compounding their trauma and violating the privacy of the deceased child without their consent and no improved outcome to the public.

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- In 2024, 54% of hotline calls were screened out and not considered reports of abuse. Mandating that all of these calls constitute a “suspected report of abuse” and therefore criteria for a CIRT will further strain resources and potentially redirect focus from the highest-risk cases.
- Funding and positions were not provided to support the additional workload the bill imposes.
- This change could unintentionally deepen disparities, particularly for low-income families and communities of color already disproportionately represented in the child welfare system.

Legislators raised these concerns during the hearing, but they were not ultimately acted upon or incorporated.

National work currently underway by the National Partnership for Child Safety, Casey Family Programs, the Center for Helping Professions, and the Center for Innovation in Population Health at the University of Kentucky will provide states with best practices in child fatality reviews and safe systems analysis. This work will inform discussions in Oregon to ensure that changes to processes are high quality and evidence based.

I am returning HB 3795 today because I urge the Legislature to commit to a transparent, data-informed review of the current CIRT process, guided by the shared goal of learning from our most tragic outcomes while preserving dignity, fairness, and equity for Oregon families.

My office will work with lead agencies to convene stakeholder discussions for the 2027 legislative session to advance a thoughtful review of the CIRT process and to ensure cross-systems discussions for where and how child fatality reviews and safe system learning should be conducted to reinforce their integrity. I believe we should engage in these discussions before making changes to the scope of CIRTs conducted by ODHS.

Sincerely,



Governor Tina Kotek