



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

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Local advocacy organization will monitor sites holding children who were separated from parents trying to enter the U.S.

Watchdog agency will provide independent oversight of sites' conditions, and ensure children's mental healthcare needs are met

Portland, Oregon—Disability Rights Oregon announced today that it will conduct independent monitoring visits of two different residential facilities in the Portland metro area that are housing children that U.S. immigration officials separated from their parents in the past few months as they attempted to enter the U.S. southern border. Children in detention, because of their age, are vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

A rise in the number of mental health professionals serving these youths sparked concerns about the degree of trauma that they may have endured and continue to experience. Disability Rights Oregon is working to ensure that, during their detention, the children have appropriate access to trauma informed mental healthcare and treatment and the conditions in which the youth are kept meet constitutional standards.

Disability Rights Oregon will also work closely with the immigration attorneys representing these children as they make their way through the immigration system.

“Every child held by the government in a facility in our state deserves to have their basic mental health and social development needs met. It’s especially important that children who’ve experienced trauma receive appropriate care.” said Emily Cooper, Legal Director of Disability

Rights Oregon. “By reaching out to local immigration attorneys and relevant officials, we hope to ensure that these children receive the care that they urgently need for healthy growth and development.”

Disability Rights Oregon has called for stronger protections for youth in detention, asking state leaders to develop standards and oversight of juvenile detention facilities so that youth are guaranteed safe conditions, access to adequate healthcare, education and programming, and trauma-informed treatment based on evidence-based practices.

About Disability Rights Oregon

For 40 years, the organization has served as Oregon’s Protection & Advocacy system. As the watchdog agency for people with disabilities in Oregon, the organization can shine a light on conditions in places that are shielded from public view and, therefore, are more susceptible to problems of abuse and neglect. Through federally granted access authority, the organization monitors conditions in settings in which people are isolated from the outside world, like jails, prisons, residential facilities, and nursing homes. Disability Rights Oregon upholds the civil rights of people with disabilities to live, work, and engage in the community. The nonprofit works to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their full potential.