

Dear Senate Health and Welfare Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 43, which would allow IDHW to provide coverage for children under age 18 with serious emotional disturbance with family incomes up to 300% of the federal poverty level. This bill is critical to the successful implementation of the Jeff D. settlement agreement and will allow many Idaho children to receive necessary treatment for serious emotional disturbance.

For the past five years our daughter, who is now 11, has been living in residential treatment centers outside the state of Idaho. My husband and I made this heartbreaking decision because the intensive treatment services she needed were not available within Idaho's communities. It is my desire to see effective, community-based treatment available for Idaho children and families. Parents and children should not have to experience the trauma of long-term separation in order to receive needed mental health treatment. This bill is an important step in that direction.

Thank you in advance for your support for this bill, as well as future efforts of IDHW to improve the children's mental health system in Idaho.

Sincerely,

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