



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Michael Reese, Chief of Police

1111 S.W. 2nd Avenue • Portland, OR 97204 • Phone: 503-823-0000 • Fax: 503-823-0342

Integrity • Compassion • Accountability • Respect • Excellence • Service

May 14, 2013

Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
900 Court St. NE, Hearing Room H-170
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 2594 A

Dear Co-Chairs Winters and Williamson and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety:

The City of Portland supports HB 2594 A, which permits a court in a commitment proceeding to award up to 12 months of outpatient mental health treatment while retaining jurisdiction over the individual for the length of the treatment order. This legislation will open another door to treatment that is currently closed to individuals in the criminal justice system that are experiencing mental illness.

An underfunded state system for providing mental health services directly impacts the City of Portland through increased demand for emergency and police services. The lack of adequate mental health care services means that individuals experiencing mental illness often receive highly expensive yet inadequate services from police and fire first responders rather than qualified mental health professionals.

Under current law it is very difficult for a prosecutor to meet the legal threshold required in order for a court to order a person be civilly committed. This legislation would not alter that legal threshold but rather, gives the court the option to require outpatient treatment. Mental health treatment has the potential to reduce criminality amongst and improve outcomes for many Oregonians by breaking the cycle of arrest, jail and release back into the community without proper treatment.

We also support appropriating sufficient funding to ensure a robust network of community based services exists when outpatient treatment is ordered, as well as viewing this as one important piece of a larger investment in community based mental health care in Oregon.

We respectfully urge your support.

MICHAEL REESE
Chief of Police

MWR/kpb

Community Policing: Making the Difference Together
An Equal Opportunity Employer

City Information Line: 503-823-4000, TTY (for hearing and speech impaired): 503-823-6868 Website: www.portlandpolice.com