



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

March 25, 2015

To: Joint Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee
Sen. Alan Bates, Co-Chair
Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair
Members of the Committee
WaysandMeans.HumanServicesSub@state.or.us

Re: SB 5526 – Oregon Health Authority – Addictions and Mental Health - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a position on Adult Mental Health which supports a comprehensive and integrated adult mental health services delivery system which includes both community and state programs and facilities. The League believes that the mental health delivery system should include alternatives to hospitalization, early intervention, residential services, supportive housing and services delivered by peers.

The League commends the subcommittee for the investments made in community mental health in the last session. These services were parent-child interactive therapy, school-based health centers, young adult interventions, crisis services, crisis respite housing, jail diversion and supported housing and employment. The League encourages the continuation of these community supports among others in the 2015-17 Budget.

The Oregon State Hospital facilities in Salem and Junction City will require a large part of the AMH Budget, but the hospitalization is required for court commitments of mentally ill patients who are a danger to themselves or others. The League commends the legislature for efforts to maintain the facilities for the most seriously ill and to move those who are recovering to residential programs in the community.

With additional funds, the aid and assist evaluations for those charged with misdemeanor and C felony level crimes could be done within the community mental health system. The commitment of these alleged offenders to the Oregon State Hospital is very expensive. Evaluations could be done at the community level at a significant savings.

The League also supports the newly established Older Adult Mental Health Coordinators to serve the senior and people with disabilities population, which have been underserved in the past. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Robin Wisdom in cursive.

Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President

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Karen Nibler
Social Policy Coordinator