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To: Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Jenna Allen

RE: SB 231

Hello Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Olsen, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ceph Poklemba, I am twenty-one, and a student at Linn-Benton Community College; I would like to start off with an apology that I am unable to be here in person today, though it does ring true to the purpose of this bill. I deal with rampant social anxiety on a daily basis, I cannot be here in person due to this, as I will, with guarantee, have an anxiety attack. This has caused issues with my education in the past. If I do not have a support system built up in my classrooms, I will generally experience two to three anxiety attacks per term, wherein I am unable to stay in the class. Currently, my only remedy to this is to physically leave the classroom, and find someplace quiet, as my campus does not offer any direct support for health issues. I have been able to warn my instructors of this beforehand, this is only if I do not have any friends in the class, as that tends to help, but is not surefire.

On top of social anxiety, I also deal with, depression, have issues with dissociation, and am passively suicidal. These are things that I tend to not be as open about, because it brings forth a different type of vulnerability. I am afraid I will be ostracized if I tell people that I tried to kill myself in high school. I have no form of support for this. I am currently in a place where therapy is not affordable, and I have no direct support from my campus. There are days where I am physically unable to get to campus due to these issues, and I do not want to miss my classes; they are not inexpensive endeavors. I have found ways to help cope with my mental illnesses, not necessarily all healthy, but my current goals rely on me getting through college and university. On the days I am unable to attend classes, it is usually because I have suffered from either, an anxiety attack, an episode of depression that leaves me immobile, an intrusive (suicidal) thought, or some wonderful combination of the above. Intrusive thoughts spread themselves in many ways, and are by no means uncommon, for instance, "I wonder what that person would look like in a polka-dot dress," could pop up by looking at someone for no reason. Mine are not so kind, I deal with them regularly, and have so for the past seven years. They range from, "I wonder what I would look like on the front of that truck," "I wonder what would happen if I just drove head-on into that car," "This stool would be really good to hang myself with," they are... not quite as pleasant, and require roughly a day for mental recovery, at minimum.

I am writing this asking for help, for myself and many of my friends who cope with mental illnesses. I need what is not offered, help from the system that has been an essential part of my life for the past decade and a half. I would like to thank you for listening to my story, it's not exactly pleasant and I didn't even get into the gritty details of it. But, I hope I am able to impart onto you what it is that I deal with, and help you understand why I need the help that this would bring. So, thank you for your considerations.