

Chair Boquist and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to urge your support for Senate Bill 1054, which will support the expansion of inpatient mental health services for veterans and active duty military families.

As a veteran of the United States Marines and someone who has experienced personal loss as a result of untreated mental illness, I understand the importance of ensuring that veterans and active duty families have access to the treatment they need. Too often, mental health services are inadequate or not specifically tailored to support military families, placing individuals at risk of homelessness, addiction or death.

Our military servicemen and women deserve quality, accessible mental healthcare. It's an ugly truth that suicide rates and mental illness are higher among veterans than non-veterans, [and data shows](#) that mental health problems, alcohol and substance use problems, and physical health problems are common and associated with suicide and mental illness incidents among Oregon veterans.

Too many veterans and active duty service members don't receive the critical mental health care they need after experience in combat. Oregon's existing resources for inpatient psychiatric care are limited, leaving many patients in crisis receiving care through emergency rooms that are not designed to accommodate their needs. Long wait times to receive treatment or logistical problems due to a lack of available beds, is the norm. While the VA plays a critical role in combating mental illness among veterans, they rely on the private sector in Oregon to provide inpatient treatment for active duty families.

Senate Bill 1054 would reduce barriers to bring new facilities online quickly and increase the supply of inpatient beds specifically reserved for veterans and active duty service members. It is a good bill, and I urge you to support it.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kent E. Studebaker". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom of the letter.