



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Psychiatric Security Review Board

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TO: House Judiciary Chairman Barker
Reps. Olson and Williamson, Vice-Chairs

FR: Juliet Britton, J.D.
Executive Director
Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB)

RE: Written Testimony for May 8, 2017, Hearing on SB 64-A-Engrossed

Senate Bill 64-A is designed to rename offensive and antiquated statutory language applicable to those living with mental illness who are also in the criminal justice system.

Renaming "Mental Disease or Defect"

As a result of a collaborative effort on the part of PSRB's Legislative Workgroup, including the Oregon Criminal Defense Association, Oregon District Attorney's Association and Disability Rights Oregon, the version of the bill before you today would replace "mental disease or defect" with "qualifying mental disorder."

Let me be very clear—the intent of this version of the bill is to simply rename stigmatizing language—not to change substantive law. In other words, this bill is not redefining what diagnoses qualify you for the "guilty" or "responsible except for insanity" defenses or for continuing PSRB supervision. As you can see, there is a preamble in the bill that establishes this very clear legislative history.

This bill aims to remove both public and self-stigma for those individuals with both psychiatric and intellectual disabilities. When a stigmatizing word is used to describe a particular population with a disability, it affects all Oregonians who have a disability. Stigma in the PSRB world creates barriers to employment, housing and relationships. One of the Board's primary responsibilities is to ensure that individuals under supervision move forward in recovery. This bill helps with that mission in that these phrases are repeatedly used in Board Orders, at Board hearings and in the Board's publications to the public. Replacing this language would have no fiscal impact on our agency yet would be a step toward removing language that only hurts, not helps, recovery.