



Oregon AFSCME Council 75 Supports HB 2831

Dear Chair Salinas, Vice-chairs Hayden and Nosse and members of the House Health Care Committee,

Thank you, for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2831. My name is Eva Rippeteau, I am a political coordinator for Oregon AFSCME Council 75. Oregon AFSCME represents nearly 27,000 employees in Oregon including many in behavioral health services – peer support specialists and counselors at counties and nonprofits and the Drs and Nurses at the Oregon State Hospital. We also represent employees in other workforces that intersect with our behavioral health system such as public defenders, and others in public safety. They all know that we need to do more to provide appropriate placements and services in our behavioral health system.

Across the board, our members see the same people rotating through their caseloads and programs. They all say that too many people they are supporting in treatment, representing in court, or end up being housed in our jails and prisons are there because there are not enough mental health supports in the community. If the inhumanity of the lack of services and supports for people experiencing a mental health crisis doesn't move you, the inefficiency, strain and costs on our other services should.

As one our members said in testimony on another bill addressing behavioral health services, there are not enough services and workforce to meet the need and too many barriers to access the services that are available. We need to be doing more to give people access to appropriate service behavioral health services. HB 2831 is a good step in providing these much needed services and we urge your support.