

Oregon Assembly

House Behavioral Health Committee

Chair; Representative Rob Nosse

Vice Chairs; Representatives Lisa Reynolds and Rachel Moore-Green

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Moore-Green and Reynolds and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

For the record, my name is Ron Williams, a resident of Portland, Oregon HD 45 and I am one of the tri-chairs of the M 110 Oversight and Accountability Council.

I am here today to provide to talk generally about the importance of the Oversight and Accountability Council.

The Council most importantly, is primarily volunteers. People who have other occupations, businesses, and callings, who set those responsibilities and obligations aside for dozens of hours per month to do the important business of the council, on behalf and for the benefit of the people of Oregon. Council members come to the table from all over the state, out of a sense of compassion, dedication and service.

This council is a very unique and distinct body established by the will of the voters. It is made of up of people who use their lived experience, personal knowledge and commitment to service for the sole purpose of making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people of Oregon.

Led by Black, Latinx, Tribal, LGBT service providers, peers, professionals and non-professional advocates who require support, meaningful sustained, responsive administrative, strategic and procedural support in order to expedite the work we are tasked with, in order to have the greatest, and urgently needed impact on one of the most pressing issues facing Oregon families and communities today. Substance use and living with a substance use disorder.

It is truly an honor and privilege to serve on the council with such dedicated, passionate leaders like Lakeesha Dumas and Blue Valentine. Serving on the council, in the truest sense, represents the best example of citizen empowerment and community engagement in the decision-making process.

Earlier, you heard about some challenges and missteps, which are real and at times significant.

I feel these challenges can be overcome and corrected with deliberate, intentional, focused effort and courageous, solution-oriented conversations.

Transformational change by a bureaucracy requires thinking outside the box when working with citizen volunteer leaders. Transformational work is what the voters asked for and that work demands doing things differently, which bureaucracies typically, just are unfamiliar with.

The council's funding values center on four main principles; Collaboration, Expansion, Flexibility and Innovation.

My hope is that you heard those words today in the presentation from OHA. These are the types of concepts that tend to get lost in red tape and institutional processes.

Going forward it would be great if the council had regular and continuous access to subject matter experts in and out of OHA who interact with and engage the council in substantial discussions regarding carrying out its mission.

I would also like to see more readily available research and policy analysis in addition to detailed transparent and readily accessible financial information.

It may be worthwhile to investigate the use of outside experts from the world of social justice grant making to provide some meaningful guidance.

Finally, we could examine bringing in other agencies to consult such as the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services and potentially other agencies with community engagement expertise who could provide assistance to OHA in supporting the council.

Overall, we are all proud of the tremendous amount of work the council has accomplished and are all hopeful that conversations like these will result in positive changes to ensure that the challenges you heard about earlier become a thing of the past.

Thanks again,

I am happy to answer any questions.

Ron Williams

Tri-chair

M 110 Oversight and Accountability Council

Portland, Oregon