

Testimony for HB2315

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Behavioral Health
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Moore-Green, Vice-Chair Nosse, and members of the Committee:

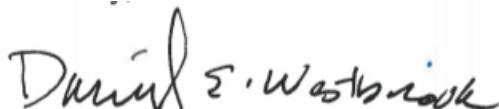
At its core, HB2315 is a bill to ensure every Oregonian working with or coming in contact with a behavioral health specialist is seen by a professional competent in suicide prevention, intervention, and or treatment.

You may not know that Oregon is the last state on the West Coast to enact such a bill. Both Washington and California have enacted similar legislation requiring professionals to have six hours of continuing education every six years. Not only are we falling behind our neighbors, but we are also falling behind many states across the U.S. who have enacted similar legislation.

Tragically we are also falling behind the country in our efforts to prevent suicide. OHA announced last week that Oregon saw an increased rate of suicide in 2019 for all ages. As we moved from having the 17th highest rate of suicide to the 9th highest the country. Meanwhile, the country as a whole saw its first decline in suicide in a decade.

Similar bills to HB2315 have come up in Oregon in prior years. Unfortunately, they have either been watered down due to pressure from special interests, or not made it through the session. Oregon needs proactive public policy, including this legislation, if we want to join the rest of the country in turning around the tide on suicides.

Sincerely,



David Westbrook, COO
Lines for Life