



David Romprey Oregon Warmline
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February 17, 2021

Honorable Health Committee Members,

I am writing to express passionate support for the approval and implementation of HB2980. Our Oregon communities will benefit greatly from peer-run respite services. These community-based, homelike settings give persons with mental health challenges the opportunity to regain balance and well-being in a setting that is welcoming, non-pathologizing and natural.

Without the high cost of medical staff, people who seek shelter and safety for their recovery can find that in a natural homelike setting in the company of peers. This is a less-expensive, more socially and environmentally supportive and much more healing environment for people experiencing extreme mental health challenges. Those of us who already have mental health providers can continue to work with our regular treatment team rather than being whisked away to a restrictive locked hospital ward where an entirely new team of medical and clinical staff are required to address us as a new patient.

In the past, I have helped to create a peer respite (Second Story in California) and I have also stayed at that respite as a client in a state of personal crisis. Peer respite is a crisis prevention alternative that will save our state from the unnecessary cost and damage of being a fail-first system. It is 2021 and time for us to adapt to modern knowledge of what works best for people who have much to contribute when we are adequately supported. Peer support works, and peer respite is an approach that can transform our ailing mental and behavioral health systems.

Thank you for supporting the timely development of new peer-run services that enable people with mental health to stay well and be contributing members of our communities.

With hope and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Kuehn".

Sharon Kuehn
Oregon Warmline & Senior Peer Outreach Manager