



Bridgeway

Freedom Through Recovery

March 1, 2021

Dear Chair Williams, Vice-Chairs Leif and Ruiz, and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

As Chief Executive Officer of Bridgeway Recovery Services, dedicated to providing services to improve the lives of children in Marion and Polk Counties, we urge you to support of House Bill 2424 - The Child Safety and Workforce Improvement Act. Our organization provides chemical dependency and mental health treatment. Bridgeway Recovery Services has expanded its services to include medically managed withdrawal, problem gambling treatment, adolescent services, corrections services, primary care and housing.

In a 2019 *Mental Health of America* report, Oregon ranks the last out of 51 states and territories in terms of access to behavioral health care for youth and suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 10-24 and has been on the rise since 2011. For youth of color, they are 25.2% more likely to use alcohol in comparison to white youth. To improve safety and support more positive outcomes for children and youth, we must invest and diversify our community-based workforce.

Our staff show up every day for youth and children. They are genuinely motivated with a genuine desire to help youth. But they have high caseloads, are working in a complicated regulatory environment, and are working with youth and children with significant and complex needs. All the while, they receive poor compensation – benefits, wages and a lack of advancement opportunities.

Board of Directors

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Chief Executive Officer

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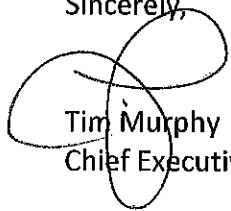
Restoring Lives
by Taking Control
of Addiction

This bill makes crucial investments in our workforce. Specifically, the Child Safety and Workforce Improvement Act will invest:

- \$1.25M per biennium in training funds to improve child/youth safety, treatment outcomes, regulatory compliance, and improve the retention and recruitment of a well-trained, highly qualified provider workforce.
- \$2.5M per biennium to support the recruitment and retention of staff of color.
- \$250K per biennium for student loan forgiveness focusing on QMHA's or social service designated staff.
- \$250K per biennium to begin an apprentice program for QMHAs/Ps, initial start-up costs for 25 apprentices.

I appreciate your continued commitment in ensuring children, youth and families have access to high-quality supports and services so more children can have the opportunity to grow up in strong, stable and loving families.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy
Chief Executive Officer