



Oregon Commission For Women

Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

My name is Camille Mercier, I serve as a Vice Chair on the Oregon Commission For Women, and I am also the Assistant CEO for Spirit Mountain Casino.

I am writing in support of HB 2485, for the enhancement of mental health and addiction treatment providers, and strongly urge the Committee to support it as well. This bill matters because we witness the mental health and addiction challenges in Oregon every day. Access to services by trained providers is substantially lacking, leaving individuals and communities in dire need and often in crisis.

KOIN news reported a study done in 2019 that found Oregon is the worst in the country for drug problems. More recently, a report in Oregon shows that the state's addiction crisis has worsened since the pandemic hit. This report states that overdose deaths in Oregon are going up, and the number of providers has shrunk.

In 2018, former Governor Kate Brown issued an executive order, declaring addiction a public health crisis. Many welcomed the plan, however, little has changed in the way of providing resources and trained providers to properly address and attend to those with addictions and mental health needs.

Drug and alcohol addiction and mental health emergencies are costly and devastating problems for our communities, with far-reaching impacts on our children and families.

We need to aggressively begin to allocate resources to remedy this growing problem, HB 2485 is a start to that. We strongly urge the passage of HB 2485.

Thank you,

Camille Mercier

On behalf of the Oregon Commission For Women

Oregon Commission for Women

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