



Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

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

For the record, my name is Jackie Leung, Co-Chair of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA). OCAPIA works for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal, and political equity for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in the state of Oregon and to maintain a continuing assessment of issues and needs confronting Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in this state. OCAPIA has several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity.

I am writing to you in support of HB 2757, which expands and provides funding for coordinated crisis services systems including the 9-8-8 suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis hotline, and I urge the Committee to support the passage of HB 2757.

Oregon's behavioral health and mental health systems are broken. In a recent report from Mental Health America, Oregon was ranked second to last – ahead of only Kansas for adults needing mental health services¹. The number for Oregon youth was worst – ranking Oregon last in the nation for providing mental health services².

The establishment of the 9-8-8 program has been shown to make a difference for Oregonians experiencing a mental health crisis. Oftentimes, all that is needed is a counselor to respond to a phone call, a text, or chat to help someone through a crisis – in Oregon 97 percent of calls were resolved or de-escalated over the phone³. Instead of dialing 911, 988 counselors will request mobile crisis intervention teams when needed.

HB 2757 will fund a staffed accessible 988 crisis and suicide prevention program with trained mental health specialists, who are available all day, every day, and would ensure that Oregon's most vulnerable will have a first responder who will be focused on the needs of the person first. Funding the 988 crisis and suicide prevention program will ensure that all Oregon residents – youth and adults – have access to much needed programs and care.

We strongly urge you to pass HB 2757, and fund a fully accessible, cultural-relevant, and language-specific 988 crisis and suicide prevention program.

Sincerely,

Jackie Leung

**Oregon Commission on
Asian and Pacific Islander
Affairs**

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1. Manfield, L. 2022, October 17. Oregon Ranks Worst in Nation for Prevalence of Mental Illness. *Willamette Week*. <https://www.wweek.com/news/courts/2022/10/17/oregon-ranks-worst-in-nation-for-prevalence-of-mental-illness/#:~:text=In%20a%20report%20released%20last,%2C%E2%80%9D%20according%20to%20the%20report.>
2. Oregon State University, Youth and Family Mental Health Initiative. <https://health.oregonstate.edu/mental-health>
3. Oregon Health Authority. 988. <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hsd/amh/pages/988.aspx#:~:text=In%20Oregon%2C%20nearly%2097%20percent,cannot%20ensure%20the%20caller's%20safety.>



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