



Support of HB5541 Public Testimony-  
March 9, 2023

Good Afternoon Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Royce Bowlin, I'm with the Oregon Alliance and we are in support of SB5541.

The Oregon Alliance is a dedicated champion and established voice in advocating for the safety, health, and well-being of children, youth, families, and communities across Oregon. We work collaboratively with OYA to ensure youth have access to quality services in their community.

We are a diverse group of organizations serving Oregon's kids and their families at home, in school, in residential settings, and within the community. We partner with dedicated community leaders, our partners in government, allied fields, and those we serve to deliver effective policies, best practices, and resources. Our focus is to support kids to live better lives and for families and communities to thrive in every corner of Oregon.

I want to specifically lift-up and support the Behavioral Rehabilitation Services rate increase included in OYA's budget.

BRS provides in the community for Youth under the jurisdiction of OYA:

1. individual and family counseling
2. academic engagement
3. linkage and access to mental health
4. connection to mentors, peers, and community,
5. other individualized therapeutic and medical supports and services

As the result of 2022 legislation, OYA, OHA, and ODHS hired a 3<sup>rd</sup> party actuarial who led us through an almost yearlong process. Based on the results, it is clear the system is severely underfunded for programs serving youth in the community. The rate adjustment will improve access to services for youth under the jurisdiction of Oregon Youth Authority. The increase will go directly to staff though improved wages and benefits, such as health care coverage for their families.



Although we still have work to ensure a well-trained, seasoned, and consistent workforce for youth and their families. This funding gets us closer and is going in the right direction, and most importantly will directly benefit youth by improving services and access to those services.

Regarding the SOT Policy Option Package 105, not included in the Governor's budget – the POP would provide treatment for youth under OYA's jurisdiction have committed a sexual offense. For youth the success rate is 91% to 95%, whereas with adults it's 75% to 80%. Over the past year, we have worked closely with OHA to identify a solution. Unfortunately, and because of the complexity, we are not in agreement on the solution. We are continuing to work towards resolving our differences which could result in the Oregon Health Plan paying for these services through the Coordinated Care system. Until a solution has been agreed on and implemented, these youth need these services. The POP for \$1.2M would provide the resources to fill the gap until a permanent solution is identified.

Again, I hope you will support SB5541 and put the \$1.2M back into OYA budget

Thank you for your commitment to our youth,

Royce Bowlin  
CEO  
Oregon Alliance