

Date: 3/15/23

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Meg Wills, MSW, LCSW

Chair Nosse & Members of the Committee,

As an active Licensed Clinical Social Worker, former adjunct MSW instructor for Portland State University, MSW field instructor and clinical supervisor for Clinical Social Work Associates (CSWA), I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 2485.

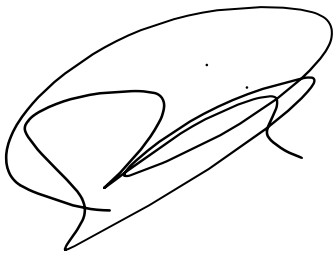
The approval of funds to expand access to high quality Social Work programs in all parts of Oregon is critical to meeting the growing mental and behavioral health needs of our communities. The pandemic, statewide housing shortages and climate-related disasters (particularly in the Southern OR region) have all contributed to major workforce shortages that impact people's access to needed care and further exacerbate already existing challenges, particularly for communities of color and historically marginalized populations.

Social Workers are trained to provide unique assets in treating our most vulnerable community members in both clinical and non-clinical settings where people seek care. Their work at individual, family and systems-levels contributes to the prevention of behaviors that put a strain on our health care systems, such as violent crimes, suicide attempts, overdoses, chronic disease, and unwanted pregnancies. I urge you to consider the passing of this bill as a an up-stream way to lift people out of poverty, support communities, and improve the health of all Oregonians.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or comments.

Kindly and with gratitude,

Meg Wills, MSW, LCSW

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Meg Wills', written in a cursive style.