

Testimony SUPPORTING HB 2767.
Submitted by Oregon Recovers
March 22, 2023
House Committee On Education

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Wright, and Members of the House Committee On Education:

My name is Tony Morse, and I serve as the Policy and Advocacy Director for Oregon Recovers. We are a movement of people in recovery from addiction with the mission to transform Oregon's fractured and incomplete addiction recovery system into a recovery-based, continuum of care which recognizes addiction as a chronic disease. I'm also a person in long-term recovery, which for me means I've not had a drink in over 6 years.

I'm here today to urge you to vote for HB 2767.

Oregon has a severe addiction crisis that affects hundreds of thousands of People:

- 18.22% of Oregonians age 12 and older have a Substance Use Disorder--the **second highest** rate in the country. That means 669,753 Oregon residents age 12 and up have a Substance Use Disorder. That's about 11,162 people per Oregon House District, and roughly 22,325 people per Oregon Senate District.

Addiction can impact people of all ages, children included.

- Oregon has 305,645 state residents aged 12 through 17. According to OHSU's 2022 Substance Use Disorder Services Inventory and Gap Analysis, nearly 8% of them have a substance use disorder. That's roughly 24,360 children statewide, or about 406 kids per Oregon House District, and 812 kids per Oregon Senate District.

Meanwhile, Oregon ranks 50th--dead last--in access to treatment.

- Our ability to provide youth treatment has shrunk. According to the Lund Report, Oregon had 144 treatment beds for adolescents struggling with addiction in 2017. In 2020, there were only 100. And last April, there were only 13 beds. These numbers are unacceptable.

Worse yet is our lack of a statewide system that connects teens to addiction services.

- In plain terms, we are failing our kids, and we have an obligation to do better.

The lack of treatment access underscores our need to invest in recovery schools.

- Our kids who struggle with addiction have a right to recovery, and recovery schools equip them with the tools they need to keep their substance use disorder in remission so they can go on to lead happy, healthy, and productive lives.

Investing in Recovery Schools is a smart investment in Oregon's economy.

- The cost of Oregon's addiction crisis is staggering. Excessive alcohol use alone cost Oregon \$4.8 billion in 2019. That figure includes almost \$2.2 billion in lost labor productivity, which ultimately drives up the cost of goods and services made in Oregon. This makes Oregon less attractive to employers who might otherwise create jobs and do business here.
- But notably, the Surgeon General's office has stated that people recovering from an alcohol use disorder can reduce their risk of reuse to below 15% after 4 to 5 years of abstinence.
- Creating and funding recovery schools will help us help adolescents significantly shrink their risk of reuse as they move into adulthood. In the long run, that will save Oregon lots of money, and help repair the damage that addiction does to our economy.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 2767. Please give adolescents struggling with addiction the lifeline they need. Thank you.