



WASHINGTON COUNTY OREGON

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbick and Members of the Committee:

My name is Zakir Khan, and I am a Government Relations Manager for Washington County. I am here to testify in support of HB 3129 and the -1 amendment.

Across Oregon today you do not have to go particularly far to find someone impacted by the access to behavioral health care crisis that is hitting Oregon. The crisis lives in your communities and within the lives of your constituents. The crisis raises acuity and does not seem to have an end point. Further, it's solution – developing behavioral health workforce has been seemingly ignored by the federal government for years. Oregon is thus quite literally on its own.

In Washington County, we feel this crisis through not having enough Licensed Clinical Social Workers and Licensed Professional counselors within our crisis team. These practitioners work in our Hawthorne Walk-in Center and serve on our mobile crisis team. Currently lack sufficient staff as 60% of them are licensed.

This session a mix of policy and funding options are on the table. As someone who has spent years developing solutions to this workforce crisis, I want to be clear, it will take both funding and policy to eventually get through this, but we must be consistent. That consistency requires the passage of HB 3129 so we can scale behavioral health education programs, support student needs so they can thrive within their programs, support supervisors of associates so we can have enough of them to provide quality supervision for our graduates and minimize the expenses of new entrants into the field.

As a result, I urge your support of HB 3129 and the -1 amendment.

Warmly,

Zakir Khan
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