

Submitter: Twila Jacobsen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2203

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

I urge your strong support for House Bill 2203, which aims to improve workplace safety and support for behavioral health professionals.

My daughter was pinned against the wall by two teenage residents of a locked facility. She was alone and only had a phone to use for getting assistance. The improvements as outlined in HB 2203 would have made her workspace much safer, and potentially she would have stayed with that job. She left it out of fear for her personal safety, and lack of training, tools and acknowledgement of the situation by management.

To support these changes, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) should offer grants to employers for risk assessments and to ensure that work settings are safe. Any newly constructed behavioral health facilities receiving public funding must be designed with elements to enhance worker safety. Oregon agencies must also be tasked with reviewing rules for client and worker safety, developing guidance for employers, and improving coordination during enforcement.

Passing HB 2203 is a necessary step toward ensuring that behavioral health workers in Oregon can perform their duties in a safe and supportive environment. By implementing these measures, we not only protect our workforce but also enhance the quality of care provided to those who rely on our services.?

I urge the committee to support HB 2203 and prioritize the safety and well-being of behavioral health professionals across the state.?

Sincerely,
Twila Jacobsen
Eugene, OR