

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1583

83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly

Chair and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Art Zamudio, and I am submitting this written testimony in strong support of Oregon Senate Bill 1583.

I have worked in the behavioral health, substance use, and public safety fields for over 20 years, including direct experience within both a Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN) and a deflection program in Lane County. From this perspective, I have seen firsthand how thoughtful oversight, clear expectations, and accountability lead to better outcomes for individuals while reducing strain on community systems.

Over the past year, deflection programs in Oregon have demonstrated meaningful promise. Early engagement, voluntary connections to services, and reduced justice involvement show that deflection can be effective when it is structured, coordinated, and outcome-focused. With the passage of HB 4002 requiring deflection programs to coordinate with BHRN providers, it is critical that the system functions as a true continuum — from first contact, to treatment engagement, to stabilization and follow-up.

Senate Bill 1583 strengthens this continuum by placing oversight within the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, an entity with experience administering public funds responsibly and tracking outcomes across systems. This structure aligns with the Sequential Intercept Model by ensuring individuals are engaged as early as possible and supported consistently as they move away from crisis and deeper system involvement. It promotes continuity, accountability, and data-driven decision-making rather than fragmented funding and disconnected services.

At a time when Oregon is facing a significant state funding shortfall, it is more important than ever that public dollars are used efficiently and strategically. SB 1583 helps ensure that limited resources are invested in programs that support recovery and stabilization — not ongoing addiction — and that can demonstrate measurable outcomes and responsible use of funds.

In Lane County, the lack of consistent statewide standards has contributed to workforce strain, service waitlists, and repeated calls for service involving the same individuals. Law enforcement, EMS, and emergency departments are often left responding to crises that could be prevented with earlier intervention and coordinated care. A fully connected deflection and behavioral health system not only saves lives, but also reduces the financial and operational burden on public safety and emergency services.

When Measure 110 was initially implemented, programs able to bill through the Oregon Health Authority were excluded from funding. In Lane County, this resulted in a

disproportionate emphasis on harm reduction services without sufficient investment in treatment engagement, recovery pathways, or measurable outcomes. While harm reduction plays an important role, funding systems should not unintentionally perpetuate instability or support programs that cannot clearly demonstrate how funds are used or what impact they have had in the community.

Recent state audits have reinforced the need for stronger oversight, consistent data collection, and accountability for outcomes. SB 1583 directly addresses these gaps by ensuring that public dollars support programs capable of demonstrating effectiveness, coordination, and meaningful community impact.

By strengthening recovery-oriented systems of care, SB 1583 will have positive impacts across multiple overlapping state challenges, including homelessness, overdose prevention, and community safety. Based on my direct experience and the lessons Oregon has learned over the past several years, this bill represents a necessary and responsible step forward.

I respectfully urge your support for Senate Bill 1583.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Art Zamudio