



Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson and members of the committee,

As a licensed clinical social worker and the Executive Director of New Avenues for Youth, I am writing in strong support of SB 1547.

For 28 years, New Avenues for Youth has worked alongside young people experiencing, or at high risk of, housing instability and homelessness. We serve youth aging out of foster care, survivors of sexual exploitation, young people facing abuse or neglect at home, and those who have been rejected because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Every day, we see how system gaps and lack of access to culturally responsive behavioral health care show up in young people's lives. Untreated trauma, anxiety, depression, and substance use too often stand in the way of their safety, stability, and future goals.

Oregon is in the middle of a real youth behavioral health crisis. Families are asking for help and too often cannot access it when it matters most. Without early support, concerns intensify, and more young people end up in crisis.

SB 1547 offers a practical, thoughtful solution. By creating a well-trained, bachelor's-level behavioral health role focused on prevention and early support, this bill helps fill critical gaps without replacing or duplicating existing providers. It allows master's, and doctoral level clinicians to focus on youth with the most complex needs, while expanding timely, preventative, access to care for kids and families who cannot afford to wait.

This bill also creates a clear and attainable pathway into the behavioral health workforce, strengthening and diversifying the field while keeping strong standards and protections in place.

At New Avenues, we see what happens when young people do not get help early, and how much changes when they do. SB 1547 is an important step toward meeting youth where they are and building a system that responds sooner, not later.

I urge your support for SB 1547.

Respectfully,


Sean Suib (Feb 3, 2026 12:48:10 PST)

Sean Suib, LCSW
Executive Director, New Avenues for Youth