

Submitter: Scott Tougas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1583

My name is Scott Tougas. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and the owner of Tougas Therapy, LLC, a small group behavioral health practice in Douglas County. I am writing today to express my support for HB 4002 and its focus on restoring accountability to Oregon's behavioral health system.

As a provider on the front lines, I am optimistic about the shift toward a structured deflection and accountability model. However, for this bill to succeed where prior efforts have failed, the State must prioritize the efficient utilization of existing resources—specifically the network of private practices and small group providers throughout Oregon.

The "Cookie-Cutter" Problem vs. Individualized Care Currently, state resources and referrals are heavily concentrated in large agencies. While these organizations serve a purpose, they often suffer from high staff turnover and a "cookie-cutter" approach to treatment. In contrast, private practices offer:

Stability: Patients often work with the same clinician for their entire recovery journey.

Specialization: Small practices provide niche services, such as our SAP evaluations for CDL holders and DUII evaluations for Douglas County, which are critical for workforce reintegration and legal accountability.

Efficiency: We are already in-network with commercial insurance, Medicare, and OHP CCOs like Umpqua Health Alliance and Trillium. We are ready to work, yet we are often excluded from the broader referral pipelines.

A Call for Inclusion I urge the new Committee and the Joint Task Force on Regional Behavioral Health Accountability to ensure that "Accountability" includes a seat at the table for small, privately-owned practices. We are the "boots on the ground" capable of providing the individualized, high-accountability care this bill seeks to promote.

Please ensure that the implementation of HB 4002 explicitly includes pathways for small group providers to participate in deflection programs and state-funded treatment initiatives.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to a safer, healthier Oregon.

Sincerely,

Scott Tougas LPC Owner, Tougas Therapy, LLC