

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Lee Stewart

February 3, 2026

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1583

Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 1583. While the intent to streamline services is admirable, this bill threatens to dismantle the progress that has been made in building a health-focused response to the addiction crisis in Oregon.

Oregon's behavioral health funding is currently in a fragile state. Introducing a massive administrative overhaul at this moment will inevitably create gaps in service as resources are moved and new committees are set up, leaving our most vulnerable neighbors without support during this transition.

This bill furthermore makes it more difficult for healthcare professionals and peer specialists to offer consistent, long-term care. When the "rules of the game" change mid-stream, providers are forced to focus on administrative survival rather than patient outcomes.

Most importantly, moving the administration of these programs toward the Criminal Justice Commission undermines the fundamental principle that substance use is a public health issue. We should be strengthening our health-based responses, not folding them back into frameworks that prioritize a correctional or "deflection" lens over clinical and peer-led support.

As a resident of NW Portland, I see the impact of these policies every day and urge you to listen to the voices of those on the front lines. Please do not move forward with SB 1583. We need a system that is stable, health-focused, and led by the community—not one that is disrupted by unnecessary restructuring.

Please oppose SB 1583.

Sincerely,

Lee Stewart
Portland, OR